

ENCOURAGING AN ECCLESIOLOGY OF COMMUNION
INTRODUCING THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS TO A PARISH COMMUNITY

by

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In Memory of Rev. Anthony J. Muzic
Teacher, Mentor, Friend



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ABSTRACT

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It is my intention with this project to focus on the laity's participation in the prayer of the Church known as the Liturgy of the Hours. While only the clergy are bound to the daily recitation of the Divine Office, the Church also strongly encourages the faithful to offer this liturgical prayer for the salvation of the world.

Many people use private devotions (the rosary, novenas, favorite prayers, etc.) in order to deepen their relationship with God. Such prayers are good in that they promote a union with God as the mind and heart are lifted up. However our spirituality in the Catholic Church is a communal one: it calls forth not only an ever-deepening personal relationship with God, but a connectedness with one another through whom we come to experience the presence of God in community.

In order to encourage this "ecclesiology of communion," I would like to introduce the Liturgy of the Hours to the people of the parish where I currently serve as Pastor. My hope is that it will not only be an enriching prayer during our weekly Eucharistic

Adoration, but one that is also used at various times and in different ways in the life of the parish. By the frequent use of this liturgical prayer in the life of the parish, the hope is that the faithful will have a deeper awareness of our rich Catholic communal ecclesiology. Even when recited “in private,” the Liturgy of the Hours will be prayed in communion with many others throughout the world, who offer this sacrifice of prayer and praise for the salvation of the world.

How can we introduce people in the parish to the Liturgy of the Hours? Can we help them incorporate this prayer not only into their daily personal devotions but into the prayer life of the parish as well? What different opportunities do we have in a parish setting to use this particular prayer? What are the creative choices we have in praying the Office? These are the questions I hope to answer in this project.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Pastoral Challenge: Focus and Rationale

Technology has brought people closer to one another than ever before in human history. Yet despite our ability to live in a much “smaller” world where we can have knowledge of and communicate with the global and universal community¹ instantly, we also live in an age that many believe is increasingly individualistic.² There is a growing trend for people to desire deeper spirituality but not deep involvement in a religion.³ This problem can be manifested in one’s prayer which may express interest in a personal relationship with God while failing to recognize the importance of one’s connection with others, especially in an ecclesial community.⁴ During the Eucharistic Liturgy, for example, some immediately offer a private prayer upon returning to their seat after receiving Holy Communion, instead of joining the community in song to celebrate their

¹ Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution for the Church in the Modern World* (Vatican: 1965), 9.

² Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (NY: HarperCollins, 2012), 193.

³ Ibid., 13: “*Newsweek* reported on two major polls in American religion... These polls found that the percentage of self-identified Christians has fallen 10 points since 1990, from 86 to 76 percent, while the percentage of people who claim they are unaffiliated with any particular faith has doubled in recent years, rising to 16 percent.” See also, p. 14: “Traditional forms of faith are being replaced by a plethora of new spiritual, ethical, and nonreligious choices.” See also Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, 7: “[M]any persons are achieving a more vivid sense of God. On the other hand, growing numbers of people are abandoning religion in practice.”

⁴ Bert Reynolds, *Deep Calls to Deep: Equipping Teachers for Facilitating Classes on Spiritual Disciplines in the Chenal Valley Church of Christ*. (D. Min. project thesis, Abilene [Texas] Christian University, 2006), 87. “...true participation in the life of God, who by his nature is communal, necessitates communion with God, with his Church, and with the rest of his creation. Authentic spiritual formation cannot take place in isolation, but must transpire in, with, and for community.”

unity in the One Body of Christ.⁵ Eucharistic Devotion may also seem to invite a more exclusively personal or devotional prayer without any communal adoration of the Eucharistic Presence, which should flow from and lead to the public prayer of the Eucharistic liturgy.⁶ This project will research the spirituality of today's active Catholics in an attempt to measure parishioners' understanding and awareness of the communal dimension of faith and the social essence of life itself.⁷ It will then encourage a spirituality that balances devotional and liturgical prayer through the Liturgy of the Hours. This prayer of the Church for the world can help to deepen one's connection with others whether they are praying it alone or in community.⁸ The Divine Office is recommended by the Church as an appropriate prayer for use during Eucharistic devotions⁹ and is an opportune form of communal prayer at those times when a priest is not available to preside at a Eucharistic Liturgy.

Ministerial Context

At the time of this writing, the author has been pastor for more than three years at a small, 300-family, rural, Roman Catholic parish in West Salem, Ohio, in the southern area of the Diocese of Cleveland. This parish community is comprised of a mixture of young, middle-aged and mostly elderly people, most of whom are blue-collar workers or retired. Though some have several acres of land, there are no full-time farmers as it is

⁵ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, (Vatican, 2011). 86.

⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Sacred Constitution on the Divine Liturgy*, (Vatican: 1963). 13.

⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, 12, 23, 24.

⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 100.

⁹ United States Catholic Conference, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (New York: Doubleday, an Image Book, 1995), #1178.

common for the land to be leased out to Amish neighbors who farm it. Religious people who reside “in the country” may tend to be politically and religiously conservative as they seem to be attracted by the stability and traditional values of rural communities.

Since the nearest Catholic schools are several miles away from their homes, a few families in the parish homeschool their children in an effort to provide them with the holistic approach to education that includes the religious education component not found in the public school system. The parish has been committed to the promotion of pro-life issues. Some parishioners take advantage of adult education opportunities, either studying the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or participating in RCIA, bible studies, or other catechetical programs. While the congregation as a whole embraces a traditional outlook, most parishioners are open to new experiences of prayer and adult education.

The people of this parish who worship together in the small, simple, 200-seat church, participate very well in liturgical prayer and song, and are often complimented on this by visitors. Mass is celebrated daily with about 15-20 participants, and Eucharistic adoration is held every Wednesday from 7 a.m. until the beginning of Mass at 7 p.m. The rosary is usually prayed by a handful of people before daily Mass and just prior to the Benediction that closes the Wednesday Eucharistic adoration. One of the main objectives of the present ministerial initiative is that the Liturgy of the Hours may be offered in addition to private devotions during Eucharistic adoration, according to the Church’s recommendation.¹⁰ Until a few of years ago, in the absence of the pastor, the Permanent Deacon in the parish would lead the people in a Communion Service when Mass could not be celebrated on weekdays. Since Communion Services are generally meant primarily

¹⁰ *Catechism*, 1178.

for those who minister pastoral care to the sick, they should not be a substitute for weekday Mass.¹¹ Thus, the Liturgy of the Hours would be an appropriate communal prayer during those times when the pastor is not available for weekday Mass.¹² Those who regularly attend daily Mass and/or Eucharistic devotions will be the main focus group of this research.

Basic Assumptions

Obviously the people of this study who are regular participants at daily liturgy or Eucharistic adoration are committed to a spirituality that includes the practice of religion, in this case, of the Catholic tradition. Catholics have come a long way in fulfilling the call of the Second Vatican Council to “full, active and conscious participation” in the liturgy, especially when people were accustomed, prior to the reforms of the liturgy when Mass was celebrated in Latin, to engage in private devotions. However, such a mentality still seems to linger in some elderly active Catholics. The young, on the other hand, may be tempted to embrace the individualism rampant in contemporary culture. If the heart of Jesus’ message is the commandment to love both God and neighbor, neglect of outreach among the elder generation must result in detriment to the young and vice versa. Jesus himself criticized apparently devout religious people who neglected their neighbor in an unbalanced focus on obedience to the Law.¹³

Some Catholic parishes have more communal “spirit” than others. Yet despite this, even those parishioners who experience the friendly and social dimensions of their

¹¹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 166.

¹² Lawrence E. Mick, *How We Worship: The Eucharistic, the Sacraments & the Hours*, 131.

¹³ *Matt 23:23*

parish environment do not always express their commitment to this dimension of faith by weekly participation at Sunday Eucharist. In fact, the prayer life of people in such community-focused parishes may still reflect the individualistic tendencies of many in our present day culture. Hence the problem does not seem to be limited to traditional communities or older parishioners but can be present even in those parishes where there is an emphasis on the social element of the parish. This assumption will be explored in the part of this project devoted to exploring the methodology behind the cultivation of the spirituality of contemporary active Catholics.

Theological Grounding and Theoretical Framework

Though from the very beginning the Church has understood itself as a “community of believers who are of one heart and mind,”¹⁴ throughout its long history, the Church has shifted in its self-understanding. It is both a community of believers and an institution, which as “Mother Church” is responsible for assisting in the personal salvation of its individual members. Living a common life was the focus of the Church’s practice and preaching in the early days following the Resurrection as described in the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁵

With the Second Vatican Council, the call to renewed spirituality that would surface in the documents of the Council Fathers accented a greater emphasis to be placed on this communal dimension of faith.¹⁶ While continuing to insist on the necessity of personal faith as a response to God’s invitation to salvation, the bishops also elevated the

¹⁴ *Acts* 4:32

¹⁵ *Acts* 2:42

¹⁶ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 9.

importance of expressing that personal faith and finding salvation in and through the Church community.¹⁷ The Mass, for example, was not to be understood essentially as the exclusive action of the celebrant who offers the Sacrifice at the altar while the members of the congregation pray privately their personal devotions or even simply follow along in their missals.¹⁸ The liturgy was to be understood essentially as the communal worship of all God's People, without minimizing either the importance of the priest's role as presider or the people's role as active participants.¹⁹

While the importance of such an ecclesial theology has often been emphasized in seminary formation as well as in adult education during the last five decades, there still exist traces of a mentality that prevents some from engaging fully in the communal dimension of the prayer and life of the Church community as they pursue a personal path to holiness. Alongside the Church's renewal during and following the years of the Council, the world itself was changing into a more global community. At the same time, it was ironically becoming more individualistic in the pursuit of personal freedom and detachment from institutions that were seen to suffocate the unique expression of the individual. Thus the consumerist drive of recent years has lead to a narcissistic approach to life that is lived surrounded by others but only to impress them or get from them what one needs or desires.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 13. "...[T]hese devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them."

¹⁹ Ibid., 14.

Despite the church's emphasis on the communal nature of sin and salvation,²⁰ there are many indications of a lack of understanding concerning the message of the Council: Mass attendance has plummeted in favor of "being with God in the woods" or "spending time in prayer in the privacy of my home"; the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which connects us with the communal dimension of sin and the need to be absolved not only by God but by the community that has been wounded through our sin, is rarely celebrated by today's Catholics.²¹ People in recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous proudly declare their dependence upon God or their "Higher Power" as the foundation of their spirituality, but some also boldly proclaim their freedom from any involvement in religion or a personal denomination.²²

The Liturgy of the Hours can be attractive to those who seek more depth to their prayer,²³ yet at the same time it can be a wonderful way to communicate the importance of a relationship with God that is lived and nourished in the midst of the Church. Even when prayed in private, the very nature of the Divine Office proclaims the presence of the community at prayer with us.²⁴ And when prayed publicly, the Liturgy of the Hours

²⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, 32.

²¹ CARA is a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. See <http://cara.georgetown.edu/caraservices/FRStats/reconciliation.pdf> for statistics on the frequency of confession by Catholics.

²² *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism, Fourth Edition* (New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2001), 10, 49, 93.

²³ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 90.

²⁴ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 20, 108.

remind us that we pray as a Church with Christ for the salvation of the world,²⁵ not only for personal growth and salvation²⁶ which we hope to acquire apart from or in spite of the world. The Divine Office brings together the proper balance between personal and public prayer. It is prayer that deepens and sanctifies not only the hours of our day but brings together the community of the Church for the sanctification of the whole world. The Church commissions Pastors to see to it that the faithful are instructed in this prayer and are invited to celebrate it in common, especially on Sundays and feasts.²⁷ Lauds and Vespers are the two hinges of the day's prayers that are especially appropriate for the Christian community.²⁸ At his Wednesday audience, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged its use by the faithful: "I would like to renew my call to everyone to pray the Psalms, to become accustomed to using the Liturgy of the Hours..."²⁹

This project will highlight the communal role of liturgy and prayer³⁰ in current theology using documents from the Second Vatican Council, current liturgical documents such as the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours*, books and encyclicals of Pope Benedict XVI, and current books of spirituality and theology that probe the nature and effects of ecclesial spirituality. Though the current literature abundantly explores this communal dimension of prayer and spirituality, somehow there exists a disconnect between what is officially taught by the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17, 27.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁷ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 23, 32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 40, 272.

²⁹ Benedict XVI, Vatican City, 16 November 2011.

³⁰ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 33.

Church and what is understood or expressed by a number of the faithful, let alone those who are not involved in any public practice of faith or who fail to pursue membership in a religion, denomination, or church (parish) community. Since those who understand the importance of religion, who belong to a specific denomination and are active members of a church or parish community often do not have contact with those who do not, catechizing the active Catholic may enable them to become catechists and witnesses themselves to others they converse with at work or in the “marketplace” who question the value of church membership and participation.

Anticipated Outcomes

If this interpretation of the witness of people at both public and private prayer is correct, the presumption is that the results of the questionnaires and interviews issued to assess progress in understanding and active participation may reveal a disconnect, at least to some degree, between personal spirituality or devotional prayer and an understanding of and appreciation for how the community fits into one’s individual relationship with God and the path to holiness.

However it is also hopefully anticipated that what will be discovered in a second data collection will be a deepened understanding and awareness of the difference between personal or devotional prayer and communal prayer, as well as a greater conviction of and attentiveness to the beneficial role of the church community and to other believers in one’s approach to holiness. From this it may confidently be concluded that one’s personal spirituality can be deepened by participation in prayer with the community for the good of the world.

Methods of Data Collection

This project, which will include research into the wellsprings of spirituality of at least the active parishioners of my parish, may suggest a condition of a broader expanse of Catholics. “Active” refers specifically to those who are practicing their Catholic faith on a regular (i.e., weekly or daily) basis, that is, whose commitment is demonstrated by attendance at church services and/or participation in other parish activities. While it would be interesting and informative to explore the spirituality of Catholics who are not practicing their faith in discernable ways on a regular basis, there is the presumption that someone who is not worshiping or praying regularly with a parish community is somehow missing the ecclesial dimension of spirituality, and in some cases, any “practice” of spirituality at all. To quote Pope Francis, “...[I]t is not possible to find Jesus outside the church.”³¹

In “measuring” understanding and awareness of the communal dimension of faith in the spirituality of active Catholics, the questions proposed in the diagnostic interview will attempt to discover their understanding of the role of the community in their spirituality without suggesting or encouraging any expected outcomes regarding the investigation. This will be especially important since attempts to impress the pastor administering the examination may result in unfounded results. This research into the spirituality of daily Mass-goers or of those who participate regularly in Eucharistic devotions will need, of course, to precede the introduction of the Liturgy of the Hours in which the theology of a priestly prayer offered on behalf of others is explained to the people. The same parishioners who were interviewed before the catechetical preparation

³¹Vatican Radio, www.news.va/en/news/pope-mass-on-feast-of-st-george-full-text, (accessed March 10, 2014).

for the praying of the Hours will be interviewed a second time after they have been catechized and have participated in the prayer of the Divine Office, to discern whether their sense of ecclesiology has deepened by having attained a better appreciation of the balance that must exist between personal or devotional prayer and prayer with and for the community.

The members of this parish congregation are aware of the author's involvement in the D. Min. program at St. Mary Seminary. However they do not yet know of this project or of the topic that will be pursued. It is not the plan, at least until the end of this project, to reveal to members of the community any information other than a desire to introduce the Liturgy of the Hours for personal and parish use, so as not to distort or in any way influence responses to the questionnaires, interviews, and other means chosen to conduct this project.

For the purpose of a sound evaluation of the success of this project, the target of the investigation will be the regular participants at daily Mass or Eucharistic devotions from whom it would be most helpful to collect information. The study will be carried out by written questionnaires as well as oral interviews. This will be done prior to any formal catechizing regarding the Liturgy of the Hours as well as following such catechesis and several weeks of practice in praying the Office, either personally or with other members of the parish,

It is hoped that this probe into the spirituality of the most obviously active Catholics will have important ramifications for their personal relationship with God. When people are imbalanced in their spirituality, they risk falling into an understanding that religion is purely for the sake of their own personal salvation, which in itself might

exclude from their awareness all those called to salvation with them. How this affects the liturgical prayer of the Church, the life of the parish community, and one's personal discipleship as a follower of the Lord will be the topics of the catechesis to be carried out.

Prospectus and Resources

The sequence of projected steps envisioned in carrying out this project include the following:

Development of a bibliography and gathering of theological data

Formulation of theological grounding

Preliminary exploratory questionnaire

Instruction on the practical method of praying the Office

Catechetical instruction on the theology of communal spirituality and communal prayer

Presentation of various approaches to the praying of the Divine Office (both monastic and cathedral)³²

Opportunity for practice of liturgical prayer, especially Vespers³³

Issuance of a second set of questionnaires and interviews

Tabulation and recording of results

The only funding necessary for this project, outside of the personal expenses of the author in the purchase of theological literature which will form the basis for the theology section, will be for the purchase of the Christian Prayer books (the shortened form of the four-volume set of the official Liturgy of the Hours) for use by the faithful.

³² Lawrence E. Mick, *How We Worship: The Eucharist, the Sacraments and the Hours*, 129.

³³ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 207.

Some parishioners may wish to purchase these for their own personal library and use. But for those who cannot or wish not to purchase these themselves, the parish will be happy to provide these free of charge out of the budget which is set aside each year for liturgical books used in the parish.

Dr. Edward Kaczuk is the advisor for this project. Fr. Michael Woost and Sister Mary McCormick, O.S.U. have accepted the request to be readers. The author intends to call upon the expertise of these and any other suggested liturgists or faculty members, clergy or lay, who may be useful resources for both a theology of communal spirituality as well as the planning for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in community. Members of the parish community skilled in music³⁴, current lectors, and the Deacon assigned to ministry in the parish, will also be called upon to assist in the planning and execution of praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

The author, as pastor of the local parish community where the Liturgy of the Hours will be introduced, will be responsible for the scheduling of the church, meeting room, etc., for any workshops or liturgical prayer that will take place at the parish throughout the duration of this project.

³⁴ Ibid., 268, 278, 279.

CHAPTER TWO

The Challenge: Faith as Discipleship and Participation

From the beginning of Christianity, faith has been lived not only as a personal choice to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, but at the same time to recognize that discipleship also requires a relationship with the Church, with other disciples of Christ. The teaching of Jesus not only shows the path to prayer and communion with God, it also reveals the need to unite that prayer and union with God with the social relationships we have with our fellow human beings. The combining of the two greatest commandments, love of God with love of neighbor, gives testimony to the fact that for Jesus, communion with God cannot exist apart from communion with our neighbor. From the first days of the Church, baptism effected both the forgiveness of sins and initiation into the community of disciples, the Body of Christ.¹

We will see that even in the first communities of the Church, disciples were sometimes more concerned about their own spirituality than with the communal life they were living as Christians. Over time, the institutional Church itself began to lose focus of its mission to spread the Gospel to all nations. Instead it began to assist its members to strive primarily for their own personal salvation from sin. While guiding individuals to personal holiness has always been part of the ministry of the Church, that goal was never an end in itself. It was the beginning of a call to bring others into a right relationship with God through participation in the Church community. Under the heading, “Communitarian Nature of the Human Vocation: God’s Design,” *Gaudium et Spes* states this very clearly:

¹ Acts 2:41, 1 Cor 12:12-22, 26-27 (NRSV).

God, who has a parent's care for all of us, desired that all men and women should form one family and deal with each other as brothers and sisters. All, in fact, are destined to the very same end, namely God himself, since they have been created in the likeness of God, who "made from one every nation of humankind who live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Love of God and of one's neighbor, then, is the first and greatest commandment. Scripture teaches us that love of God cannot be separated from love of one's neighbor: "Any other commandment [is] summed up in this sentence: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself...'" therefore love is the fulfilling of the law:" (Rom. 13:9- 10; see 1 Jn. 4:20). It goes without saying that this is a matter of the utmost importance to people who are coming to rely more and more on each other and to a world which is becoming more unified every day.²

Indeed, that communitarian thrust was the very mission and prayer of Jesus himself to the Father "that they may all be one ... even as we are one."³

The Influence of Culture on Faith

Spirituality (here understood as the path to holiness) will always be influenced to some degree not only by one's ecclesial identity or association (if possessed), but also by the influence of the prevailing culture. Like everyone else, people of faith do not live their spiritual lives in a vacuum. Although the values they embrace and the beliefs they adhere to may be clearly distinct from those of the society in which they live, it takes a conscious effort for adherents of the faith to supply the spiritual values lacking in the secular realm. The first step, however, is to discern how one's beliefs may be influenced by the world in which they live. Often the awareness of the influential role of society in one's faith life comes through graced moments, ways in which God seeks to open our eyes. Vehicles of God's enlightening grace may include books, talks, homilies, the association of those with like values and the like.

² GS 24.

³ Jn 17:21-22.

The Incursion of Rampant Individualism

One objective of the project outlined in this paper is to attempt to throw some light on the extent to which people may be influenced by the current pervasive sense of individualism in the culture. The purpose of enlightenment is to lead to an acknowledgement of the influence it exercises on contemporary spirituality and the ecclesial sense of mission. Charles E. Miller puts it this way: "...[T]he problem of individualism...is so much a part of American culture that it affects how we pray, even without our suspecting it. Individualism is like the smog in the air we breathe. We cannot avoid it; we can only hope to overcome it."⁴ Part of the Church's mission is to read the "signs of the times"⁵ so as to respond appropriately to the corrupting aspects of the prevailing culture. As Tim Sensing observes, "[T]he dominant point of view in society, the hegemony found in culture, is often what ministry needs to call into question."⁶ The current project will then propose an antidote enabling contemporary parishioners to prevail over the individualism so rampant in the culture; namely, the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, even when it is prayed apart from the community.

"Spiritual but not Religious"

So what are the signs that our present culture is preoccupied with the sense of individualism? Perhaps the first is the popular phrase heard often today from those who have disassociated themselves with religion, yet still acknowledge they are people of faith: "I am spiritual but not religious." According to Diana Butler Bass, some thirty

⁴ Charles E. Miller, *Together in Prayer: Learning to Love the Liturgy of the Hours* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), xvi.

⁵ GS 4.

⁶ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), xxi.

percent of adults describe themselves in this way.⁷ She suggests that the word “spiritual” is far more appealing than the term “religious.”⁸ James Martin, S.J., in his book, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, suggests the same: “...[I]f ‘spiritual’ is fashionable, ‘religious’ is unfashionable. This is usually expressed as follows: I’m spiritual but not religious.’ It’s even referred to by the acronym SBNR.”⁹

Be that as it may, the words, “spiritual” and “religious,” do not mean the same thing for everyone and this can lead to much confusion. Robert Fuller, an historian, says, “The word ‘spiritual’ gradually came to be associated with the private realm of thought and experience, while the word ‘religious’ came to be connected with the public domain of membership in religious institutions....”¹⁰ Diana Butler Bass suggests that, in general, spirituality is taken as a positive term, whereas religion often evokes the negative: “Spirituality is understood as somehow more authentic, religion, as having a somewhat cynical orientation.”¹¹ In this understanding of the phrase, being “spiritual, but not religious” is a critique of public, institutional religion. In fact, at worst, Martin says that many believe “religion is the most despicable of social evils, responsible for all the wars and conflicts around the world.”¹²

⁷ Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012), 66.

⁸ Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 67.

⁹ James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* (New York: HarpersCollins Publishers Inc., 2010), 75, ePub edition. Hereafter, *Jesuit Guide*.

¹⁰ Robert Fuller, *Spiritual but Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (New York: Oxford, 2011), 6.

¹¹ Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 67.

¹² Martin, *Jesuit Guide*, 77

However, being “spiritual” can also mean longing for a meaningful connection: To say that one is “spiritual but not religious”...is often a way of saying, “I am dissatisfied with the way things are, and I want to find a new way of connecting with God, my neighbor, and my own life.”¹³ What is interesting about the expression is that the word *religio* has an etymology that means “to bind or connect.”¹⁴ So another way of understanding the word “spiritual” is to see it as the desire to connect to God and others, but not through a religious institution. This is what some Catholics mean when they say that they do not find “spirituality” (i.e., a connection with God), in their religion.¹⁵ A more direct experience of God is sought without any intermediary.¹⁶ Richard Rohr, a popular contemporary Franciscan author, gave a talk which he titled “Religion and Spirituality: Healing the Divide.”¹⁷ In it he said that clergy ask how you can speak of spirituality without religion. Yet he quipped, “We have spoken of religion without spirituality for a long time and no one has complained about that!”

So it can be confusing to speak of spirituality. For some, spirituality means a desire for separation, not from others, but from institutional religion. (Fallen away or non-practicing Catholics argue that they are spiritual but do not go to church anymore.) For others however, spirituality can connote a more individualistic sense of faith, as will

¹³ Ibid., 68.

¹⁴ Ibid., 98.

¹⁵ Adele J. Gonzalez, *The Spirituality of Community* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 15.

¹⁶ It should also be noted here that, according to James Martin, being “spiritual” can also be a term which implies that “that you have sampled a *variety* of religious beliefs that you have integrated into your life.” (emphasis mine). Martin, *Jesuit Guide*, 79 (ePub edition)

¹⁷ *Religion and Spirituality: Healing the Divide*. 2007. CD-ROM, Circle of Life International Speaker Series with Richard Rohr, OFM

be seen below. As Bass states, the “language of spirituality is certainly different from the language for God and faith that many Christians used as children (or that their parents used). Because it is a new language, it fosters misunderstanding.”¹⁸ Hence Gonzales agrees that, “Spirituality is one of the most misunderstood terms in Christianity.”¹⁹

For some, spirituality is not just a rejection of religion but also a rejection of the need to connect with others besides God. “When I think of spirituality, I think of individualism” says a Lutheran pastor. “Spirituality is all about me, but religion is communal. It is about us.”²⁰ Charles E. Miller says that there is a “strong inclination to make religion private, an individual matter between God and me, the kind of spiritual honeymoon from which others are excluded.”²¹ This is the definition of spirituality being referred to here with the suggestion that today’s culture leans toward individualism rather than toward the community. Here, religion is rejected not just because it is an institution, but because as such, it requires a commitment, a “connection” and a “binding” to others in matters pertaining to faith. This understanding of spirituality may indeed be based on a desire for union with God, but a union apart from a relationship with others in faith.

Some reject religion and embrace “spirituality” because they disagree with the doctrinal or institutional dimensions of religion. Rohr says that these believe they have their own enlightenment and so don’t need anything or anyone else.²² But others embrace spirituality not necessarily because they reject religion as such, but because they buy into

¹⁸ Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 68.

¹⁹ Gonzalez, *The Spirituality of Community*, 15.

²⁰ Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 193.

²¹ Miller, *Together in Prayer*, 66.

²² Rohr, *Religion and Spirituality: Healing the Divide*.

the culture's assumption that looking out for oneself is the top priority of life. "We live in a consumer society that places a high value on individual preferences and decisions.... Our culture, perhaps more than any other in history, has exalted the individual above the community or society."²³ Richard Rohr would say that people today do not always want to stand on someone else's shoulders and so are highly individualistic.²⁴

Part of the problem with this, Martin claims, is that going it alone in spiritual matters keeps us from knowing when we might be heading in the wrong direction:

...[N]ot [wanting to be] "religious" may be another way of saying that faith is something between you and God. And while faith is a question of you and God, it's not just a question of you and God. Because this would mean that you, alone, are relating to God. And that means there's no one to suggest when you might be off track. We all tend to think we're correct about most things, and spiritual matters are no exception. Not belonging to a religious community means less of a chance of being challenged by a tradition of belief and experience. It also means less chance to see that you are misguided, seeing only part of the picture or even that you are wrong.²⁵

An example of this individualistic spirituality is evidenced in a sadly humorous Facebook post that was written by one of my "friends" (actually an acquaintance) on this popular social networking website. The woman had this to say (not to me directly but to anyone who reads her timeline): "I truely (sic) love Jesus and all his teachings and healings, but I seriously hate when people browbeat me with him. In all honesty, it seriously turns me off. In the end, it's between me and God, not me and you. I'm pretty

²³ Rev. Laurence E. Mick, *How We Worship: The Eucharist, The Sacraments, and the Hours* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2009), 21.

²⁴ Rohr, *Religion and Spirituality: Healing the Divide*.

²⁵ Martin, *Jesuit Guide*, 80 (ePub edition).

sure you won't even be there when it's my turn to meet him so knock it off Jim Jones."²⁶

In attempting to define "spirituality," *Wikipedia* states:

The use of the term "spirituality" has changed throughout the ages. In modern times spirituality is often separated from Abrahamic religions, and connotes a blend of humanistic psychology with mystical and esoteric traditions and eastern religions aimed at personal well-being and personal development....In modern times spirituality has come to mean the internal experience of the individual. It still denotes a process of transformation, but in a context separate from organized religious institutions: "spiritual but not religious."²⁷

Wikipedia also claims that,

After the Second World War spirituality and religion became disconnected....The distinction between the spiritual and the religious became more common in the popular mind during the late 20th century with the rise of secularism and the advent of the New Age movement. Authors such as Chris Griscom and Shirley MacLaine explored it in numerous ways in their books. Paul Heelas noted the development within New Age circles of what he called "seminar spirituality": structured offerings complementing consumer choice with spiritual options.²⁸

Wikipedia continues: "Among other factors, declining membership of organized religions and the growth of secularism in the western world have given rise to this broader view of spirituality. The term 'spiritual' is now frequently used in contexts in which the term 'religious' was formerly employed."²⁹ *Wikipedia* further illustrates the individualistic dimension of this modern spirituality:

Modern spirituality is centered on the "deepest values and meanings by which people live." It embraces the idea of an ultimate or an alleged immaterial reality. It envisions an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his/her being. Not all modern notions of spirituality embrace transcendental ideas. Secular spirituality emphasizes humanistic ideas on moral character (qualities

²⁶ Comment seen on my Facebook page, February 24, 2012 (7:02am), <https://www.facebook.com/fatherjps>.

²⁷ "Spirituality," *Wikipedia*, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality> (last accessed September 26, 2013)).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

such as love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, responsibility, harmony, and a concern for others). These are aspects of life and human experience, which go beyond a purely materialist view of the world without necessarily accepting belief in a supernatural reality or divine being. Personal well being, both physical and psychological, is an important aspect of modern spirituality. Contemporary authors suggest that spirituality develops inner peace and forms a foundation for happiness. Meditation and similar practices may help any practitioner cultivate his or her inner life and character.[unreliable source?] Ellison and Fan (2008) assert that spirituality causes a wide array of positive health outcomes, including “morale, happiness, and life satisfaction.”³⁰

A Culture of Individualism: “Sheilaism”

Pope Francis and other religious figures of our times have commented extensively on the lack of a social awareness of our present culture.³¹ Yet I am most surprised to hear someone who is not speaking from a religious framework comment on an awareness of individualism that is present in society. For example, these are the opening words in a movie about a young man who decides as an experiment, to live entirely from ads posted on Craigslist, the online advertising website:

If you took a snapshot of America today, what would it look like? Some say we have lost the sense of community that used to carry us through tough times. Some say technology and social media fuel this isolation. Have we become so caught up in our own lives that we don't notice life outside our bubble? In my own small way, I'm going to try to find out.³²

³⁰ “Spirituality,” *Wikipedia*.

³¹ See *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 67: “The individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favours a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships and distorts family bonds.” See also, no. 99: “Our world is being torn apart by wars and violence, and wounded by a widespread individualism which divides human beings, setting them against one another as they pursue their own well-being.”

³² Garner, Joseph, dir. 2012, *Craigslist Joe*. CLJ Films. Rented from iTunes, 2013. Storyline as shown on IMDB website: “In a time when America's economy was crumbling and sense of community was in question, one guy left everything behind to see if he could survive solely on the support and goodwill of the 21st century's new town square: Craigslist.” IMDB Website, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1486616/>, (accessed October 27, 2013).

I find it interesting that even a secular movie would recognize this current running beneath our society today.

Another *Facebook* post by novelist Anne Rice, posted on July 28, 2010, included her resignation from the Christian religion: “Today I quit being a Christian. I’m out. I remain committed to Christ as always, but not to being Christian or to being part of Christianity.”³³ Again, this individual seems to be rebelling against not only Christianity as a religion or institution, but even against the idea that to belong to Christ is also to belong to his disciples. Pope Francis recently spoke against this kind of thinking when he said that you cannot have a relationship with Jesus without the Church.³⁴

Fr. Robert Barron, a popular contemporary theologian who among other things produced a video series called “Catholicism,” describes the views of a woman named “Sheila” who is a young nurse:

When asked about her religious convictions, Sheila said that she adhered to no particular faith or set of dogmas but had instead pieced together her own religion from a number of different sources and according to her whim. She had, she said, “my own little religion, which I call ‘Sheila-ism.’” Bellah³⁵ remarked that he had stumbled here upon the distinctively American form of religion: “eclectic, superficial, and above all, willful.”³⁶

This woman, Sheila Larson, Bass says, “drifted away from church and named her religion after herself, dubbing her faith “Sheilaism.” Sheila became a paradigm for late 20th

³³ Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 20.

³⁴ <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2013/05/08/pope-tells-sisters-you-cant-follow-jesus-without-the-church/> (accessed 8 February 2014).

³⁵ Robert N. Bellah wrote a book called “Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life,” University of California Press, 1985. In this book which Barron quotes here, Bellah discusses “Sheilaism” at length.

³⁶ Robert Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith* (New York: Image Books, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., 2011), 278 (Kindle edition).

century faith--individualistic, therapeutic, private, and inner directed."³⁷ Catherine Bell concurs with those who recognize this rejection of religion as institution and manifestation of an individualistic and private faith: "There is still a prominent tendency to depict the replacement of good communal religion, by an introverted, narcissistic spiritualism of the sort that Bellah described as Sheilaism."³⁸

So how does one reconcile the spiritual vs. religious debate? Martin suggests that it's not a matter of either/or, but of both/and: "Overall, being spiritual and being religious are both part of being in relationship with God. Neither can be fully realized without the other. Religion without spirituality can become a dry list of dogmatic statements divorced from the life of the spirit. This is what Jesus warned against. Spirituality without religion can become a self-centered complacency divorced from the wisdom of a community."³⁹

Individualism in the Church

In his book, *The Triumph of God*, J. Christian Beker speaks of how the Pauline letters of the New Testament give us a sense of Paul's emphasis of the mission of the Church over individual salvation:

Paul's apocalyptic theology challenges us to rethink our traditional conceptions of salvation and ethics. The center of Paul's thought is misunderstood when it is located in individual justification or in the equation of redemption with individual heavenly bliss or in a sectarian and elitist ecclesiology that defines itself simply over against the world. The universal scope of God's coming reign necessitates a radical conception of the church for the world. Christians are only then "in Christ" when they become partners in God's cosmic redemptive plan for his world. Since the human being is placed within the power structures of the world, there is a profound solidarity and interdependence not only between all people in

³⁷ Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 44.

³⁸ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 201 (Kindle edition).

³⁹ Martin, *Jesuit Guide*, 86 (ePub edition).

the world, but also between our “inner world,” our “social world,” and our “ecological world”...Through God's action in Christ this solidarity of sin and death is replaced not by a world-neglecting individualism but by the solidarity of the “new creation.”⁴⁰

A moral theology professor told a story that powerfully exemplified the spirituality embracing “individual heavenly bliss” over that characterized by a sense of partnership in God’s cosmic plan for his world. There was a wicked woman who didn’t leave behind a single good deed when she died. So the devil plunged her into the lake of fire. But her angel stood before the throne of God and remembered a forgotten small act of goodness: the wicked woman had once pulled up an onion from her garden to help a starving person. God said that the angel should pull her up while she held on to that onion and so she was saved. Soon others latched onto this woman to be saved as well, but she kicked the others off of her and said “This is *my* onion” and so the others fell back into the lake of fire. The angel wept because God wanted everyone to be saved together. Had she not succumbed to the temptation that destroyed her, there would have been life and love not only for her but for everyone. The moral of the story is that no one reaches God alone. We are meant to carry each other to the kingdom.⁴¹ But the paradigm today is “my” success over and above the success of others.

In an interview conducted in August of 2013 by Antonio Spadaro S.J., Pope Francis said:

The image of the church that I like is that of the holy, faithful people of God. This is the definition I often use.... Belonging to a people has a strong theological value. In the history of salvation, God has saved a people. There is no full identity without belonging to a people. No one is saved alone, as an isolated individual,

⁴⁰ J. Christiaan Beker, *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), xiii-xiv (Kindle edition).

⁴¹ See Mick, *How We Worship*, p. 137: “Christianity is fundamentally a communal religion. We are not called by God as separate individuals but are called into a community of faith.”

but God attracts us looking at the complex web of relationships that take place in the human community. God enters into this dynamic, this participation in the web of human relationships.⁴²

In what ways has the Church in the past encouraged or emphasized the need for personal salvation without including the need for all of us to reach God together? Perhaps the liturgical practices of many in the Church have been guilty of this. It was not unusual for Pre-Vatican II missals adapted for the use of the people to provide private prayers for them to read during the course of the liturgical celebration.⁴³ In fact, "the faithful drew more from popular forms of piety than from the liturgy, the source of their spiritual life, to the point that liturgy and piety or devotions finally became quite separate."⁴⁴ Pope Benedict, when he was known as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, recognized this in his book that stressed the importance of seeing Church as "brotherhood": "...[T]he Church is essentially a community of brothers, [and] compels us to celebrate the Eucharist as a rite of brotherhood in responsory dialogue--than to have a lonely hierarchy facing a group of laymen each one of whom is shut off in his own missal or other devotional book."⁴⁵

In preparing for this project, I have been amazed at how frequently contemporary spiritual authors and even papal documents reflect on this sense of individualism that is

⁴² Spadaro, Antonio. 2013. "A Big Heart Open to God." *America*, September 30. http://www.americamagazine.org/pope-interview_ (accessed November 6, 2013).

⁴³ "It sometimes happens that novenas or similar practices are inserted into the very celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. This creates the danger that the Lord's Memorial Rite, instead of being the culmination of the meeting of the Christian community, becomes the occasion, as it were, for devotional practices." Pope Paul VI, Apostolic exhortation *For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (*Marialis Cultus*) (February 2, 1974), no. 31.

⁴⁴ Bishop Marc Aillet, *The Old Mass and the New: Explaining the Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum of Pope Benedict XVI* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 35.

⁴⁵ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 740 (Kindle edition).

still expressed in our liturgical practices today. Matthew Kelly writes in *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic*:

Our world is racing more and more toward an individualistic world, and the parish is one of the casualties of this rampant focus on self. Many people come to Mass on Sunday but never participate beyond that. They don't engage the community and the community doesn't engage them. Furthermore, they can often come and go on a Sunday without speaking to anybody else except during the sign of peace. It is, for these people, a wholly impersonal experience devoid of communal meaning.⁴⁶

Though the use of a devotional missal by members of the faithful is rare today, the sense is that the liturgy is often engaged in more for one's own personal satisfaction than as a celebration by and for the community. This becomes apparent in the way people choose their seat when attending daily Mass. In the parish where I currently serve as Pastor, the church building itself is rather small, holding only two hundred people at most. When people come for daily Mass (an average of 15-20 parishioners), they would be spread out in the church from left to right and from the front to the back. Are they coming to a liturgical action that was for their own personal growth in holiness or to truly celebrate with the community the liturgical action which is meant to draw us in closer communion with one another (and thereby to God)? I was taken by surprise when, one morning after having preached on this very point at the Mass the day before, I entered the church only to find that everyone had taken a seat in the first few pews closest to the altar! Though I did not expect such a response nor did I request it, the people got the message and of their own accord decided to make a change in their choice of liturgical seating. Perhaps it is simply education regarding the communal dimension of liturgy and

⁴⁶ Matthew Kelly, *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic: How Engaging 1% of Catholics Could Change the World* (Beacon Publishing, 2012), 67.

even of personal holiness that needs to be made more a part of our preaching and teaching.

Even though education on this theology of ecclesial communion is necessary today, we must keep in mind that even such education will need to become part of the conversion process that calls us to recognize the influence of our narcissistic society. We may in fact be knowledgeable regarding authentic ecclesial theology⁴⁷ yet still be unduly influenced by the individualism of our culture. Charles E. Miller points out that “sometimes prayer which we are asked to offer and which is outgoing, unselfish and intended for the good of others is not satisfying. That is one reason why we may prefer to have a menu from which we can choose our private devotions rather than the liturgy, even though the Church teaches us that ‘every liturgical celebration is a sacred action surpassing all others.’”⁴⁸

Even priests may be touched by the prevailing individualism. Though in my formation as a priest I was schooled in the theology of ecclesial communion, for some time it was somehow natural for me to pray the Office more out of a desire for personal holiness than for the hope that through this liturgical prayer I, as an ordained member of the Church, might embrace the entire household of God, even beyond the ecclesial walls. In his book on renewing the priestly heart, John Sassani speaks of the centrality of the Divine Office for priests:

⁴⁷ See Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, XXIV: “Theology is a relational language. Community takes precedence over the individual throughout a theological discourse. Although biblical texts and Christian tradition address individual transformation into the image of Christ, predominately those theological resources emphasize the communal nature of Christian formation.”

⁴⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7.

There are times for us as priests, when the Office is not a blessing beyond measure, merely an obligation, or a burden that finds us only reading the words, going through the motions. I think we all know these phases of our relationship with the Office. We all know as well that we willingly commit ourselves to this practice. So what might help us pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* more beneficially? One thing that helps me is the belief that Christ is always praying for me, for you, for the worldwide Church and for [the] (sic) whole world--all the time.... The *Liturgy of the Hours* allows us to participate in his prayer for the Church and the world in pockets of time throughout the day.⁴⁹

Even for the priest, the Office ought not to be prayed only for the sake of personal devotion. Rather it can be seen as joined with his priestly ministry at the altar where the one, holy and acceptable Sacrifice is memorialized with Christ for the Church and the world. As a leader of the parish congregation, his personal prayer life impacts all the people he meets, thereby counteracting the influences of the secular society.

This dichotomy of personal devotion versus selfless prayer for the sake of the world is a challenge for the laity as well.⁵⁰ “Sometimes people come to the liturgy expecting it to be their weekly time for private prayer. They arrive at church hungry for quiet time to nourish their personal prayer life.”⁵¹ It is this stance that the questionnaire of this project will focus on with parishioners. Do people come to Mass or our weekly Eucharistic devotions more for the sake of their own private prayer life, or do they come with an awareness of and need for the community that shares their faith? Adele Gonzales believes that “many devotional practices such as the Divine Mercy chaplet and new Marian devotions are spreading rapidly, and there is a rebirth in the tradition of spending

⁴⁹ Father John E. Sassani, *Renewing the Priestly Heart* (New Jersey: Renew International, 2011), 13.

⁵⁰ See *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 70 : “There is a kind of Christianity made up of devotions reflecting an individual and sentimental faith life which does not in fact correspond to authentic ‘popular piety.’”

⁵¹ Mick, *How We Worship*, p. 22.

time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.”⁵² Why? Because Gonzales believes that the participants in these devotions identify spirituality with piety and devotional practices, so much so that “for many lay adults today, the term ‘Catholic spirituality’ is an oxymoron.”⁵³ Rather, she says that spirituality must be about relationships, *all* relationships, not just our relationship to the Divine.⁵⁴

Richard Hays points out in his exegesis on the letter to the Corinthians that the problem of a focus on personal spirituality has been with us from the founding of the first church communities: “If we deny the resurrection, we find ourselves turning inward and focusing on our own religious experience as the matter of central interest. That is what some of the Corinthians were doing.... This inward turn can take the form of pietistic religion interested only in soul saving, or it can take the form of ‘New Age’ religion interested only in cultivating personal ‘spirituality.’”⁵⁵

The concern of St. Paul in the early Christian community of Corinth continues to be a concern of our present Pope, Francis. In his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he writes: “It is no longer possible to claim that religion should be restricted to the private sphere and that it exists only to prepare souls for heaven.”⁵⁶ He goes on to say that

Today, our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to many people’s thirst for God, lest they try to satisfy it with alienating solutions or with a disembodied Jesus who demands nothing of us with regard to others....[I]n other parts of our society, we see the growing attraction to various forms of a

⁵² Gonzalez, *The Spirituality of Community*, p. 15.

⁵³ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁵ Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians (Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Preaching and Teaching)* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 281.

⁵⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 182.

“spirituality of well-being” divorced from any community life, or to a “theology of prosperity” detached from responsibility for our brothers and sisters.⁵⁷

Ecclesiology of Communion

So far this paper has outlined what clearly has been an ancient and recurring issue in the Church: an overemphasis on personal devotions with an exclusive focus on one's own salvation. What the Scriptures point us to is a spirituality that includes an ecclesial communion, that is, a union with others in a Church that hopes, prays and works for the inclusion of all people in God's kingdom.⁵⁸ Delving further into the topic will highlight ecclesial theology which clearly supports the communal nature of the spirituality emphasized in the liturgy, not only in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, but in the Liturgy of the Hours as well. While the Eucharistic liturgy is the “source and the fount” of the Church's life, the Liturgy of the Hours “extends” this prayer throughout the cycle of hours that make up each day. Since many volumes have been written on a spirituality of ecclesial communion, the focus of this continued study will be to extract some of the more pertinent theological literature that highlights the theme of helping to reorient today's parish spirituality in an outward direction. After a brief look at how the theology of communion flows from the Triune nature of God, and how it is at the heart of both communal and even private prayer, it will be shown how the Eucharistic Liturgy and its “extension” in the Liturgy of the Hours is in its essence the Church's most effective and all inclusive prayer for the salvation of the world.

⁵⁷ Ibid., no. 89-90.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 180: “Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God... The Gospel is about the kingdom of God. (cf. Lk 4:43)”

The Triune God as the Genesis of Ecclesial Communion

It seems best to begin in a general way with the reminder that the Catholic theology of communion is rooted in the very nature of the Triune God.⁵⁹ Because God is a Unity of Three Persons, a community exists within the essence of God whereby the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in relationship to one another. In the creation of man and woman, this Triune God made human beings in God's own image and likeness, which means, in part, that God created them to live as social beings who relate to one another in a spirit of communal unity. It is not good for human beings to be alone.⁶⁰ "We are made for relationships and we grow to completeness only in community with one another."⁶¹ Our beginning and our final end is communion with our Triune God and with one another.⁶² The theology of the "Beatific Vision" rightly describes our hope of enjoying the incredible Beauty that is God. Yet, at the same time, it does not describe the totality of heavenly life which we believe includes the reflection of God's beauty in the creatures made in God's image and likeness. As Robert Barron suggests, we need many such metaphors to describe the divine life of heaven. It is Beatific Vision, yes, but it also life lived in the "City of God," in the heavenly Jerusalem, as one experiences the social and culture dimension of life in the earthly cities in which we are citizens.⁶³ Again, the

⁵⁹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), xxi.

⁶⁰ Gen 2:18, NRSV

⁶¹ Mick, *How We Worship*, 138.

⁶² See Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 25: "True participation in the life of God, who by his nature is communal, necessitate communion with God, with his church, and with the rest of his creation. Authentic spiritual formation cannot take place in isolation, but must transpire in, with, and for community."

⁶³ Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, location 3842 (Kindle edition).

Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* speaks to this ecclesiastical communion: "It has pleased God to save us and to make us holy, not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by forming us into a single people who worship him in truth and who serve him in holiness."⁶⁴

The Judeo-Christian tradition, from the beginning of the promises made by Yahweh to Abraham, "our father in the faith," has been a call and promise made to a people, a Chosen People, a community of faith. This is the reason why covenant is spoken of so often in the Hebrew Scriptures for it is a metaphor of the binding together of many persons (the root meaning of the word "religion"). God made this covenant not with individual Hebrews but with a people. And it is in Christianity that we see ourselves as "a people" and thus as in possession of a communal faith.⁶⁵ "In a word, Christian life is profoundly social. It is communitarian."⁶⁶

The Call to be Instruments

When God spoke to the Israelites as the "Chosen People," God was not playing favorites in the way that we love one group of people over another. The Israelites were chosen so that they might be the instruments through whom God calls other nations to share their faith in the one, true God. As such, the Israelites were missionaries and it was specifically through them that the Messiah would eventually be born. Through Jesus the High Priest, all those baptized into him have also been called to an intimate relationship with the One who can save them as well as to share in his mission of drawing all people

⁶⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 9.

⁶⁵ Gonzalez, *The Spirituality of Community*, 50.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

to God the Father.⁶⁷ We proclaim this liturgically as at each Mass we are reminded of the call we share through baptism in the priesthood of Christ:

For through his Paschal mystery,
he accomplished the marvelous deed,
by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death,
summoning us to the glory of being now called
a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people for your own possession,
to proclaim everywhere your mighty works,
for you have called us out of darkness
into your own wonderful light.⁶⁸

As a chosen race and priestly people, we offer prayer and sacrifice so that in proclaiming the mighty works of God, others may come to share in our salvation in Christ.⁶⁹

The Role of Private Prayer

A main component of Christian faith (and indeed of all religion) is the practice of prayer. For Christians of the Catholic Tradition especially, this prayer is simultaneously communal and private. "The private prayer of the members of the Church is offered to the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, and as such is always necessary and to be commended. Community prayer, however, has a special dignity since Christ himself said: "Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them."⁷⁰ (Mt. 18:20) It is this "special dignity" of community prayer that Charles Miller also emphasizes when he says, "We will have made progress in the ecclesial spirituality, a spirituality which is

⁶⁷ "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Pt 2:9.NRSV

⁶⁸ Roman Missal, 3rd edition. Preface I of the Sundays in Ordinary Time.

⁶⁹ Michael J. Begolly, *Leading the Assembly in Prayer: A Practical Guide for Lay and Ordained Presiders*. (San Jose: Resource Publications, Inc., 1997), 14.

⁷⁰ *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 9.

specifically Catholic, when prayer in the first instance means liturgical prayer, prayer together through Christ, and not a solitary experience."⁷¹

But Miller also emphasizes the goal of private prayer to be preparing us for and leading to liturgical prayer where "the primary orientation is to the Father through the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit,"⁷² making liturgical prayer Trinitarian.⁷³ Miller gives the example of a violinist who spends many hours practicing alone so that through that individual effort a fuller participation in the magnificent harmony of a symphony orchestra may follow. He suggests that the same process is true for a ballplayer or an actor.⁷⁴ Thus while the Church warmly commends private devotions, it also teaches that the liturgy, by its very nature, far surpasses any of them.⁷⁵ There is perhaps a danger in our practice of private prayer: "If we rely on our own prayers, we may tend to favor the points of view that please us and set aside the ones that don't. A prayer handed down by the Church forces us to go beyond our purely individual concerns and immediate preferences, which are often limited and motivated by self interest."⁷⁶

In his book, *Our One Great Act of Fidelity*, Ronald Rolheiser speaks clearly of the two kinds of prayer: communal and private, or liturgical and devotional, and suggests that they are often confused:

⁷¹ Miller, *Together in Prayer*, 9.

⁷² Ibid., 42.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Miller, *Together in Prayer*, 46.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Georges-Albert Bassinet, *Companion Prayer Book to the Liturgy of the Hours* (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2010), 88.

...although five hundred people might be sitting in meditation together in a church or praying the rosary,...this is still private or devotional prayer. Conversely, someone might be praying the office of the church alone at home in an armchair, or a priest might be celebrating the Eucharist alone at the kitchen table, and this is public, liturgical prayer. The distinction...is not dependent upon the number of people participating, or whether the prayers is taking place in the church or even whether the prayer...is being prayed in a group or privately.... [L]iturgical, public prayer might more aptly be called *priestly* prayer, while private & devotional prayer might be better called *affective* prayer.⁷⁷ “Priestly prayer” is understood in the sense of the common priesthood of the faithful, not just the ministerial priesthood of the ordained. Priestly prayer is the prayer of Christ through the church for the world.⁷⁸

Christians have all been made a priestly people by virtue of their baptism. The Church’s liturgical prayer is made more for the world than for itself. The Church does not exist for its own sake, but as an instrument of salvation for the world.⁷⁹ To the descriptions of “private” and “devotional” prayer, Rolheiser adds the description of “affective” prayer. This prayer has a different intent. Its aim is to draw us and our loved ones into a deeper intimacy with Christ.⁸⁰ But the personal intimacy with Christ it cultivates is not merely for our benefit alone. It is also made for the sake of our union with Christ in and with our brothers and sisters. We need such private, devotional and affective prayer. But all of us additionally need to offer priestly prayer each day. We pray as priests every time we sacrifice self-interest for the good of the community.⁸¹

This distinction by Rolheiser is really at the heart of this project. It has been my experience in praying in our parishes that, as he says, we often confuse communal and

⁷⁷ Ronald Rolheiser, *Our One Great Act of Fidelity: Waiting for Christ in the Eucharist* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 87-88.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 89.

⁸¹ Ibid., 90.

devotional prayer, and many seem to emphasize private prayer over liturgical prayer. Indeed, our private or “affective” prayer is meant to shape our friendship with Christ and deepen the unity we are called to with Him. Yet this prayer, and even the goal of unity with Christ, can never be separated from the call to experience this union with others. Yet how often do we all become so influenced by the individualism of our culture that while we seek discipleship with Christ, we do so to the forgetfulness or even neglect of the community, both the ecclesial and the secular communities to which we belong.

The Eucharist as Communal Prayer Par Excellence

The liturgical, communal prayer of the Catholic Church is expressed most especially in its celebration of the Eucharist, the “source and summit” of the Church’s life.⁸² Pope Benedict reminds us that this Eucharist is not aimed primarily at the individual: “In the Eucharist a communion takes place that corresponds to the union of man and woman in marriage. Just as they become ‘one flesh,’ so in Communion we all become ‘one spirit,’ one person, with Christ.”⁸³ This “classical” Eucharistic theology has been in place from the earliest days of Eucharistic celebration.⁸⁴ And yet for many people, the Mass provided a reverential atmosphere facilitating individual prayer without inviting participation in the liturgy itself.⁸⁵ This practice was true even in the early centuries of the Church. St. Augustine in the fifth century chastised his people for

⁸² *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

⁸³ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 142.

⁸⁴ See Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, p. 725 (Kindle edition): “...in the classical theology of the Church, the Eucharist has been seen not so much as the soul’s meeting with Christ, but rather as the *concorporatio cum Christo*—as the Christian’s becoming one in the one body of the Lord.”

⁸⁵ Miller, *Together in Prayer*, 42.

wanting to decapitate Christ, thinking they could receive the head (Christ) without the body (the members of the Church). He insisted that we must receive the whole Christ.⁸⁶ Many centuries after Augustine, another great thirteenth-century doctor of the Church, Thomas Aquinas, wrote that the ultimate purpose of the Eucharist is the unity of the Church.⁸⁷ Finally, in our own era, Thomas Merton observed, "[W]e will never appreciate the real presence fully until we see the intimate connection which exists between the Mystery of the Eucharist and the Mystery of the Church..."⁸⁸ Lawrence Mick also points out that "for the first thousand years of the Church's history, when people spoke of the 'real body' of Christ, they meant the Church, and they called the sacramental body the 'mystical body' of Christ. In the past thousand years, we have reversed the terms, naming the Church the Mystical Body of Christ."⁸⁹

The Eucharist is both the symbol of our unity and its cause. In fact, the Eucharist is the means through which we intensify our unity every time we gather.⁹⁰ It was the prayer of Christ in the final discourse at the Last Supper as recorded in the gospel of John that "all may be one."⁹¹ Joseph Ratzinger, in *The Old Mass and the New*, spoke of the Missal in the liturgical reform of Vatican II as containing within it this "ethos of fraternity":

⁸⁶ Mick, *How We Worship*, 107-108.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Thomas Merton, *The Living Bread* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), 133.

⁸⁹ Mick, *How We Worship*, 109-110.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 110.

⁹¹ NRSV, Jn 17:21.

There is no doubt that together with an ecclesiology of communion, the *social* quality--in the theological sense of the term--defines the very *ethos* of the Missal produced by the liturgical reform... So as to demonstrate this communitarian emphasis, the new Missal [of Paul VI] increased the number of dialogues between the priest and the faithful and provided for a more active participation by everyone in the liturgical action.⁹²

Mick uses the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* to show how the procession of the people to receive Holy Communion is important in its symbolism:

The communion procession expresses [this] unity in two ways. The first is that we are all to say the communion song throughout the procession. It is to begin when the presider receives communion and continue until the last person has received. The second is that we are all supposed to maintain a common posture during the procession, which means that we all remain standing until all have received the body and blood of the Lord (see *GIRM* 42).⁹³

The Liturgy of the Hours: Liturgical Prayer or Devotional?

For almost forty years, since I started praying a modified version of the Divine Office in the high school seminary, I have considered this prayer more for my benefit than for the good of the Church or the salvation of the world. Even though in my seminary years, I prayed the Office with the seminary community most of the time, I did not understand that we were praying, in fact, for the members of the Church and even for the secular world, both of which would eventually be the focus of our ministry. Reflecting on this personal experience is the reason why I believe that many Catholics can participate in Mass weekly or even daily, yet be oblivious to the fact that our liturgical prayer is meant primarily for others, not for ourselves.

Yet the *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* makes clear that the Office, "like other liturgical services, is not a private function, but pertains to the whole

⁹² Aillet, *The Old Mass and the New: Explaining the Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum of Pope Benedict XVI*, 42-43.

⁹³ Mick, *How We Worship*, 111-112.

body of the Church. It manifests the Church and has an effect upon it.”⁹⁴ It also instructs pastors to “see to it that the faithful are invited and helped by requisite instruction to celebrate the chief Hours in common, especially on Sundays and feasts.”⁹⁵ As a pastor for more than ten years, I have failed up to this point, to instruct the people I serve or to celebrate with them the Liturgy of the Hours. At one parish assignment where I was appointed as Parochial Vicar, I did in fact pray Lauds or Morning Prayer with a handful of parishioners before the weekday morning Mass, but I was simply following parish custom (albeit a good one initiated by the founding pastor).⁹⁶ The *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* also encourages the laity to participate in the Hours so that their prayer and lay apostolate may have a positive effect on others: “Wherever groups of the laity are gathered and whatever the reason that has brought them together, such as prayer or the apostolate, they are encouraged to recite the Church’s Office by celebrating part of the Liturgy of the Hours,... [B]y public worship and prayer they can have an impact on all men [sic] and contribute to the salvation of the whole world.”⁹⁷ And again, this same *General Instruction* instructs clergy and religious not only to be aware of the importance of their responsibility to pray the Hours, but ends by noting that “The same encouragement is to be given to the laity.”⁹⁸ In 2011, Pope Benedict catechized on the Psalms during his Wednesday General Audience. He used that occasion to encourage the

⁹⁴ *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 20.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁶ I believe that my own negligence in this regard is most likely true of many other Pastors and Parochial Vicars, and I intend to offer, as part of this project, a questionnaire to the parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland where I serve to inquire whether my perception is accurate.

⁹⁷ *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 27.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

faithful to join in praying the Divine Office: “I would like to renew my call to everyone to pray the Psalms, to become accustomed to using the Liturgy of the Hours, Lauds, Vespers, and Compline.”⁹⁹

Because the Divine Office is intended to be the prayerbook of everyone in the Church¹⁰⁰, Charles Miller says that the Liturgy of the Hours “will expand our appreciation of all liturgy by forming within us an ecclesial, a ‘church’ spirituality.”¹⁰¹ Outside of the Liturgy of the Eucharist itself, no other liturgical prayer seems to encourage this ecclesial communion and spirituality more than the Liturgy of the Hours for “...the Liturgy of the Hours is above all the prayer of the whole Church for the whole Church, indeed for the salvation of the whole world.”¹⁰² Yet again how often we have relegated the use of the Divine Office primarily to clergy as part of their responsibility to serve the Church through prayer. But “...the praise of the Church is not to be considered either in its origins or of its nature as the preserve of clerics and monks; it belongs to the whole Christian community.”¹⁰³ When I was in the seminary, I remember hearing a priest comment that the reason he did not pray the Office regularly is that he believed it to have its origins in the monastic way of life, and therefore was not suited for the life of the diocesan priest. Nor was it a realistic expectation that secular priests pray all the Hours every day. I have since heard other priests express the same misunderstanding.

⁹⁹ “Fr. Z’s Blog”, <http://wdtprs.com/blog/2011/11/pope-benedict-everyone-should-pray-the-psalms-liturgy-of-the-hours/> (accessed 8 October 2013).

¹⁰⁰ Miller, *Together in Prayer*, xvi.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

¹⁰² *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 187.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, no. 270.

Communal Setting and Symbolism

The preference of the Church is clearly that the Liturgy of the Hours be prayed in a communal setting, as most clearly manifested in the practice of many religious communities: "As often as the communal celebration may take place with the presence and active participation of the faithful, it is to be preferred to individual and quasi-private celebration."¹⁰⁴ And yet, even when this is not possible, praying the Office alone is still participating in a liturgical, not just devotional, prayer: "Whoever prays the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours does not say them in his own name so much as in the name of the whole body of Christ.... In the Divine Office, however, even someone praying the Hour alone is not praying the psalms privately but recites them in the name of the Church..."¹⁰⁵ Liturgical prayer is never prayed merely as an individual: it is communal by its very constitution.¹⁰⁶ This community prayer is designed to be a "generous, outgoing, largely other-centered type of prayer."¹⁰⁷ In elementary school, I was taught at the risk of committing at least a venial sin not to "neglect morning or evening prayers." Yet I would never have thought of the "sin" as being an omission to pray for others, since my prayers were offered for my own personal needs and intentions (which did at times, at least, express a request for God's help on behalf of another person). But Lauds and Vespers in the Liturgy of the Hours are not essentially our own personal morning and evening prayers. They are prayers we offer for others: Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer "are not prayers that we say for ourselves, nor indeed prayers whose formulae we need to find

¹⁰⁴ *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 187, no. 108.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Bassinet, *Companion Prayer Book to the Liturgy of the Hours*, 90.

¹⁰⁷ Miller, *Together in Prayer*, 41.

meaningful or relevant.... They don't have to be relevant for our private lives. We pray them as elders, as baptized adults, as priests, to invoke God's blessing upon the world.”¹⁰⁸

Summary

As Lawrence E. Mick says with tongue in cheek, “[F]or liturgy, some assembly is required.”¹⁰⁹ Indeed. Liturgy is certainly about our praise and adoration of God. It is about thanksgiving and petition and prayers of sorrow for sin. But it is not fundamentally about ourselves alone. It is always a prayer on behalf of others as well.. The celebration of the Eucharist is the prayer of unity above all other prayers. But the Liturgy of the Hours, meant to extend the Eucharistic praise of God and prayer for others at every Mass, allows us to keep alive the connection we are created and called to have with our brothers and sisters. For as Catholics, we believe in an ecclesiology of communion, in a Church that exists not for itself or even solely for the piety of its own members, but which has been called into existence by Christ so that all people may hear the Gospel proclaimed. And all people, called to salvation, may indeed be saved from themselves, from a life lived “not only for ourselves but for Him,”¹¹⁰ and a life in Him must also include a life shared with all whom he died to save.

How easy it is for all of us, clergy and laity alike, to be influenced by the culture of death, the church of individualism, the worlds of isolation, separateness and loneliness that threaten on all sides. Even as people of faith, as disciples of Christ who came to save all people, we forget that life is not narrowly about our own personal holiness. Like the

¹⁰⁸ Rolheiser, *Our One Great Act of Fidelity*, 92-93.

¹⁰⁹ Mick, *How We Worship*, 19.

¹¹⁰ *Roman Missal*, from Eucharistic Prayer IV.

woman whose only good deed on earth was to share an onion from her garden with a hungry man, we too easily forget that life in Christ means life with and for others.

Though this teaching, this “ecclesiology of communion” is immersed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, proclaimed by popes, written in the General Instructions of the Roman Missal and of the Liturgy of the Hours, taught by countless authors, and manifested in the very prayer of the liturgy we participate in weekly (or daily), we still too often cover our faces in private prayer to the One whose hands were always extended outward.

The parish to which we belong may be very social, friendly, even outgoing. But do the people who make up the community truly recognize their mission to be a light to the world, a vehicle of prayer for the salvation of all people? If it were true that such a fundamental understanding of who we are and who we are called to be were deeply embedded in our awareness and activity, why would there be a flurry of documents from Vatican II, reminders from the popes, and homilies of our pastors about how we can better be the community God calls us to be in Christ? I propose that the constant reminder that we’re all in this together be the daily practice of the Liturgy of the Hours. Even when prayed “alone,” we are always praying liturgically and communally, for the very salvation of the world at large, not exclusively for ourselves.

CHAPTER THREE

Invitation to the Presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours

A bulletin article was published inviting the members of the congregation, especially those who attend daily Mass, Eucharistic devotions, and the adult education session on Sunday mornings, to attend two presentations during November. The advertisement in the bulletin read,

Do you attend daily Mass or our weekly Eucharistic adoration? Come learn how to pray using the breviary, the official prayer book of the Church. We will be providing these books to you free of charge for use before daily Mass and during your time of adoration. This prayer can be offered with others or as part of your personal devotional prayer. Prayer changes us, and it changes the world. Are you ready to lift up your mind and heart to God in a new, yet ancient, way? Then please join us for one of these two presentations: Sunday, November 17 and 24, from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. in the church meeting room OR Thursday, November 14 and Friday, November 15, at 7 p.m. in the church meeting room.

This bulletin invitation was then followed by two different opportunities for this presentation: one was offered on two consecutive Sundays between the two Masses when the parish traditionally has an adult education session directed by a qualified parishioner. This particular time slot allows for about sixty minutes of adult education during the time our children are attending their PSR classes in another building. About 10-15 people who participated in the 9:00 a.m. Mass or who will be attending the 11:15 a.m. Mass appear for this weekly opportunity during the school months of the year. The other offer was for an adult education opportunity that is occasionally held on Thursday evenings from 7-8 p.m. Thus there will be a presentation for approximately 60 minutes on two consecutive Sunday mornings beginning at 10 a.m., and 60 minute presentations on two consecutive evenings beginning at 7 p.m. during November 2013. Because of the small size of the parish, a large number of attendants is not envisioned, but the hope is that once people

experience the communal praying of the liturgical prayer, more will be invited to learn how to pray the breviary from them. Future additional catechetical sessions like these can always be offered for those who express an interest, but those potential participants were not available or inspired to come to the first sessions.

Preliminary Questionnaire

Before the actual catechesis on the Liturgy of the Hours, the parish community was invited to take a brief survey before Mass so that I may assess two basic questions: 1) How communal is the spirituality (and prayer) of Catholics who attend Mass at this parish? and 2) How familiar, if at all, are people with the prayer known as the “Liturgy of the Hours”? The survey consisted of eight multiple choice questions, including ones that dealt with the age group and gender of the participants. There were also four questions concerning the reasons why people come to Mass with the option to choose “Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree” as their answer. The final question, concerning whether they pray more for their own needs or those of others, sought an answer based a scale of one to five. The results of this survey will be reviewed in the next chapter.

I introduced the questionnaire before each of the three weekend Masses. I asked for a couple minutes of their time before Mass to fill out a survey about spirituality and prayer that would assist me in introducing a prayer called the “Liturgy of the Hours” to the parish community. I told the congregation it was anonymous and that it is intended only for those who were 18 or older. After this brief introduction, I gave them about 3-4 minutes to finish and when I could see that most were done, I invited the ushers to collect the papers. About 300 completed surveys were collected.

At this time I also reminded the assembly that I would be offering two presentations on this prayer. One would take place that Sunday and the next Sunday following the 9:00am Mass. The other presentation would take place on that Thursday and Friday evening at 7:00pm. All were invited to attend.

Catechetical Outline

Here is the outline I developed for the catechetical part of this project. This outline, included in Appendix A, contains these major sections:

1. The Call of the Scriptures to Pray Always
2. The Mission of the Church: To Pray for the Salvation of the World
3. The Liturgy of the Hours as Liturgical Prayer
4. A Brief History of the Liturgy of the Hours
5. Learning How to Pray the Breviary
6. Praying the Divine Office Together (Monastic and Cathedral Styles)
7. Using the Liturgy of the Hours in Devotional (Personal) Prayer
8. Incorporating the Liturgy of the Hours in the Parish

Also included in this outline were online and book resources for further information on the Liturgy of the Hours.

Initial Exercises

The presentations on the two Sunday mornings yielded an attendance of 12 people the first week and 13 the following week. The presentations were about one hour long. The presentations on Thursday and Friday evenings had 12 people in attendance the first week and 11 the following week and lasted about one hour and fifteen minutes. Having an extra 15 minutes in the evening presentations allowed me to offer the catechesis at a

more relaxed pace, as I felt a bit rushed to present all the material in just one hour's time on the Sunday mornings. At the end of the second presentation, I made available three handouts, which those present could read at home. The additional resources offered more information on the Liturgy of the Hours. The people in attendance from both groups were encouraged to join together for the actual Praying of the Hours on the two consecutive Sunday mornings following the presentations as well as on a late-afternoon (5:30 p.m.) gathering on the last Sunday of Advent.

Following the second catechesis of both presentations, those who had participated in the first catechesis were asked to respond a second time to the same questionnaire they had filled out after the first catechetical session. The questionnaires from the beginning of the presentations will be compared to those from the end of the presentation to determine if there was a change in understanding and appreciation for the communal nature of spirituality and of liturgical prayer, and to see if those present had acquired an adequate understanding of the Liturgy of the Hours. The results from these surveys will be discussed in the next chapter of this paper.

The parish purchased and provided the one-volume breviary known as the *Shorter Christian Prayer* and made these available for use in the parish either for groups or individuals. Thirty of these books were purchased from Amazon¹ at the cost of \$15.14 each. Those who attended the presentations were invited and encouraged to take one home for personal use after the second catechetical session if they wished to begin praying one or more of the hours at home. However they were reminded to bring them

¹ *Shorter Christian Prayer: The Four-Week Psalter of the Liturgy of the Hours Containing Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer* (Catholic Book Publishing Corp., May 1, 1988). Website accessed November 8, 2013. http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0899424082/ref=oh_details_o05_s00_i00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

back for the communal prayer on Sunday morning. Several people asked if they could be purchased from the parish. Most of the breviaries were taken home by parishioners to use during the week. I explained during the catechetical presentations that three breviaries are available for use: the four-volume *Liturgy of the Hours*, the one-volume *Christian Prayer*, and the smaller one-volume *Shorter Christian Prayer*. The latter contains only Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer and the Common of Seasons. The *Christian Prayer* edition includes all these plus Daytime Prayer and the Common of Saints. It was also explained that the full four-volume edition includes the Office of Readings.

Between the time of the second presentation and the first time we prayed the Office together, a parishioner who is a devout daily Communicant, had mentioned that he received the one-volume *Christian Prayer* breviary as a gift from the parish Deacon and his wife a couple of years ago, however, he did not know how to make use of it at the time, as was evidenced by its pristine condition. I set up the ribbons for him and took a few minutes to explain the workings of the four-week cycle, the Common of Seasons and the Common of Saints. He had several questions concerning the proper way to pray the Office.

I also met three parishioners present during our Wednesday Eucharistic devotions that week, each of whom had taken a breviary for personal use during their adoration time. However, they seemed like deer caught in headlights in regard to finding their way through the pages. This indicated to me that, despite the fact that the second catechetical presentation was meant to be a practicum on how to actually navigate through a particular prayer of the breviary, the presentation of background information like the various hours

in the Office, the Common of Seasons and the Common of Saints, etc. did not afford me enough time for practical application. This revealed that any future presentations would need to add a session to walk the participants through the process of praying the Hours. I did remind the participants several times during the second session that this seemingly complicated process would become second nature to them, comparing it to how easily they follow the rituals of the Mass, whereas those new to Mass attendance experience the same sense of confusion in not being able to follow the memorized prayers, blindly imitating the various postures of standing, sitting and kneeling, and being confused as to when and how to sign themselves during the liturgy.

Becoming Knowledgeable of Styles in Praying the Office

The next step in educating the laity in the praying of the Divine Office was to explain and demonstrate its two styles of execution: the Monastic and the Cathedral. Praying the Liturgy of the Hours: Monastic Style

Following the initial catechetical sessions, three prayer experiences were offered. One took place on Sunday, December 1, 2013, the First Sunday of Advent between the two morning Masses, when the adult education group normally meets. (This was one of the times when a catechetical session took place two weeks in a row.) There were 27 people in attendance. Just prior to this first prayer experience, I offered a 30-minute presentation on the psalms as the previous Sunday had not allowed the time necessary for this part of the catechesis. I also took a few minutes to go over the navigation through the *Shorter Christian Prayer* breviary for our prayer. I pointed out the page numbers, the location of Zechariah's canticle on the back of the front cover, etc. I also pointed out that the verses of the psalms and canticle were prayed alternately by those on the left and right

side of the church (as the monks in choir would do as if they were speaking to each other in their prayer).² Morning prayer was prayed in its traditional, monastic form as I asked those present to take places in front and on either side of the church so that they could pray antiphonally. I lead the assembly during this Morning Prayer and joined the people in the pews so that they might have a sense of how this monastic style is generally prayed in seminaries, monasteries and similar settings.

We began with the Invitatory Psalm, then sang an Advent-themed song. The participants were then invited to be seated as we prayed the psalms, alternating sides in accord with the verses. Someone was invited beforehand to read the scripture reading and then lead the responsory. We stood for Zechariah's canticle and again, prayed this while alternating sides. I offered instructions while we prayed, for example, pointing out page numbers, inviting the congregation to sit or stand, and instructing them to pray the psalm verses alternately.

Afterward, I invited the people to be seated in the pews and asked for questions following this first experience of praying the Liturgy of the Hours. I also invited any comments they wished to share on what this experience was like, knowing that this conversation would be continued at the mystagogy to take place the following Sunday. Again I encouraged the people to take the books home with them and to try praying the Office during the week, perhaps using only one of the Hours a day, especially Compline as this is the easiest Hour to negotiate in that no flipping from one section of the breviary to the other is required. They were reminded to bring these breviaries back with them the following Sunday.

² See "Presentation on the Psalms and Preparation for Praying Lauds" in Appendix D.

On the following Sunday, December 8th, during the one-hour time slot between the Sunday Masses, we again had a prayer experience of the Liturgy of the Hours. It was similar to the way it was prayed during the previous Sunday so that people could solidify their sense of how the monastic style of prayer can be used. I trained a parishioner (the person who leads the adult education sessions on Sunday mornings during this time) to lead the people during the praying of Lauds. This was done to show how anyone can lead this prayer in the absence of a member of the clergy.³ It is foreseen that when the pastor is not available for daily Mass, such as when he is on vacation, the deacon or any member of the community can lead others in the praying of the Hours. Again, questions were fielded following the prayer.

Following is the bulletin announcement used to invite people to pray the monastic and cathedral styles of prayer:

I would like to invite everyone to join us for the celebration of Morning Prayer at 10:15 a.m. in the church. It will last about 15 minutes and we will provide the necessary books. During the last couple of weeks I have given presentations on the official prayer of the Church, which is an “extension” of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, called the “Liturgy of the Hours.” These “hours” are periods of the day (morning, daytime, evening, and nighttime) when Catholics around the world pause for a few minutes of prayer in order to sanctify the entire day and to obey the Lord’s command that we “pray always without losing heart.” Such daily prayer at set hours had its origins with the Jewish people who prayed the psalms that are part of our Old Testament. The apostles modified their Jewish prayer as they incorporated their faith in Christ, and other Christians followed. Later this prayer became more ritualized in monasteries as monks gathered at set times to pray together, and this led to the practice of priests praying the Liturgy of the Hours or “Divine Office” each day (a promise made at ordination).

³ The *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* notes in no. 254 that if a priest or deacon is present, he normally presides.

Such prayer allows us not only to grow in our personal relationship with the Lord, but also gives us the opportunity to pray for the salvation of the world. Since it is an official prayer of the Church, it is “liturgical” prayer, just as the sacraments are, especially the Eucharist, since they allow us to pray together as a community. Even when we use the “breviary” or Liturgy of the Hours book by ourselves, we are still praying with and for the larger community. The Jewish people and Muslims as well also pray at certain times during the day, so we join with many others in the world in offering praise and prayer to God at every moment of every day. This indeed, is “right and just.” Please join us in this prayer called “Lauds” which is the praise of God.

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours: Cathedral Style

All who attend Mass on the weekend, especially those who participated in the catechetical sessions, were invited to join for a Solemn Advent Evening Prayer Service on Sunday, December 22, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. Those who help with decorating the church for Christmas were present for this prayer, as well as others who decided to come just for the prayer itself. This Vespers service was carried out in the Cathedral style. The purpose here was to show the various ways in which the Liturgy of the Hours can be prayed, from the more traditional Monastic style (also best suited for praying the Hours on one’s own), to the public Cathedral style, where there is more room for creativity. The people did not use the one-volume breviary, but were given a hand-out that served as the worship aid.⁴

At this Vesper service, the paschal candle was lit and placed before the altar but on the ground floor of the church as a reminder that when the shadows come, we look to the light of Christ. As the presider, I wore an alb, stole and cope to reflect the solemnity of Vespers, especially as it is prayed on a Sunday evening in Advent Time. The candles on the altar and by the tabernacle were lit. The prayer began with an Advent-themed song, and the people were invited to be seated for the praying of the psalm and canticle from the New Testament. One psalm was sung based on a simple chant introduced and

⁴ See “Worship Aid for the Fourth Sunday of Advent” in Appendix D.

practiced briefly beforehand by the organist and cantor. The New Testament canticle was also sung, using a song employing the words of one of the canticles in the breviary. The psalm and canticle did not correspond to the ones provided for the Fourth Sunday of Advent as there is flexibility in choosing these according to the Cathedral style of prayer. After the psalm and canticle, the people were encouraged to reflect on the meaning of God's Word during a few moments of silence.

A member of the congregation was invited beforehand to proclaim the Scripture reading. A brief homily by the presider followed. For the praying of the Magnificat, all were invited to stand as we sang a familiar version of this gospel canticle from the parish hymnal. I incensed the paschal candle and altar as is often done during the singing of the Magnificat.

For the intercessions, several members of the assembly were invited forward to offer intercessory prayers that were written beforehand to reflect the current needs of the world, the Church and the local parish and community of West Salem in which the parish is located. The people were also given the opportunity at this time to pray aloud their intentions. The Lord's Prayer was chanted and the Sign of Peace was offered prior to the concluding prayer and blessing by the Presider. The liturgy concluded with a song.

Though the basic structure of this Cathedral style of prayer mimics the more traditional Monastic style of the Office, there are some differences. For example, there is more freedom to choose what texts will be used in the former, such as the psalms and scripture reading. The intercessions can be different from those used in the breviary and the assembly can be encouraged to add to these through spontaneous intercessory prayer.

Overall there is more flexibility in the Cathedral style of prayer than in the more traditional praying of the Monastic Office.

CHAPTER IV

Use of a Quantitative Method

Two methods were used to obtain data for the project. The first method was quantitative. A questionnaire was distributed both to the parishioners at large and to those who volunteered to participate in the project through a program of catechesis on the topic. Its function was to compare the prevailing ideas and practices of the congregation with those of the volunteer group and to evaluate the effect of education on the Hours by tallying the concrete responses.

Preliminaries

Before beginning the catechetical presentations, the entire congregation at all three Masses were invited on one weekend to fill out a survey. The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain a general sense of the spirituality and prayer life of active Catholics (i.e., those who regularly participate in weekend Mass). The quantitative methodology chosen to carry out the project included thirteen multiple-choice questions. Qualitative methodology was also employed following the catechetical presentations and liturgical experiences. These will be discussed later in this chapter.

Before distribution of the survey, the congregation was informed that the questionnaire was anonymous and would be used "to better serve the spiritual needs of the parish community of St. Stephen," a very general, but sincere statement. Only those eighteen or older were asked to fill out the survey. And finally it was noted that some questions *might* allow multiple answers, but the participants were to choose *only* the one answer that *best* answered the question for them. This instruction was repeated in writing at the top of the survey. A few minutes were allotted to fill out the survey. Since the

questionnaire was presented about five minutes before Mass, a number of latecomers did not have opportunity to take the survey.

Although the written survey instructed the people to choose only *one best* answer for each question, and though this admonition was reiterated verbally during the preliminary instruction on procedure, twenty-three surveys were returned in which one or more of the questions were marked with more than one answer. These were excluded from the final analysis. That so many chose multiple answers to some questions suggests that the questions may have been inadequately delimited or that the framing, appropriateness or delimitations of the possible answers were inadequate, making it difficult for respondents to settle on only one answer.

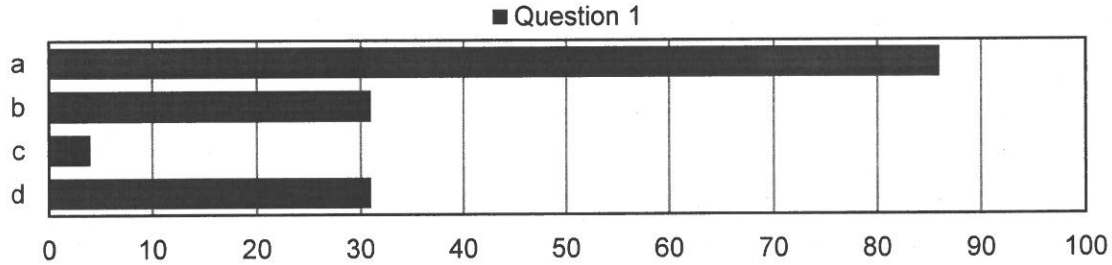
This survey provided a broad sense of the thinking of the respondents in regard to spirituality, prayer and religion. Though helpful in providing an overview of the congregation's understanding of these concepts, the results of a second, qualitative method used to measure results of the project seemed to provide greater insight, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Survey Results

The pages below tally and chart the results of the general survey completed by 156 people before all Masses one weekend. The number to the right indicates the number of responses made to each option. The charts on the pages that follow each question present a visual picture of the percentage of responses to each answer.

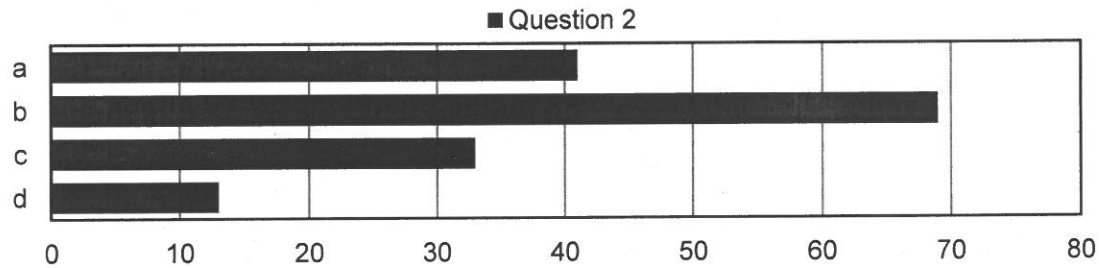
1. Which of the following best describes your understanding of “spirituality”?

- | | |
|--|----|
| a) a process of spiritual growth according to the dictates of one’s religion | 86 |
| b) a person’s search for the sacred apart from the practice of religion | 31 |
| c) something practiced mostly by clergy and religious brothers & sisters | 4 |
| d) trying to live a good life despite what one believes about God | 31 |



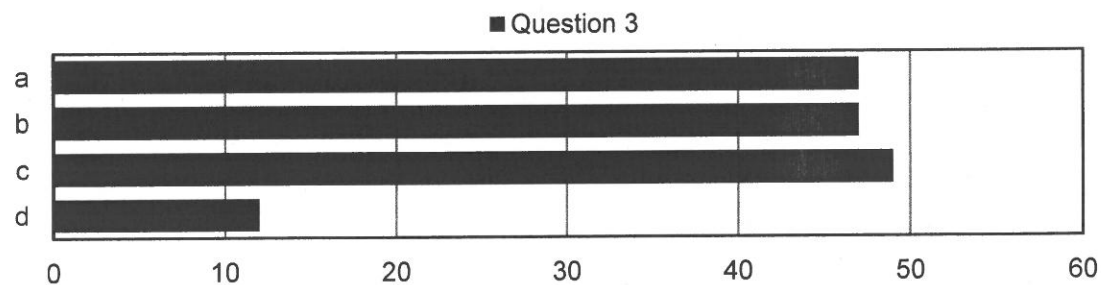
2. Which best describes your prayer?

- | | |
|--------------------------|----|
| a) praise of God | 41 |
| b) thanksgiving to God | 69 |
| c) petitions or requests | 33 |
| d) sorrow for my sins | 13 |



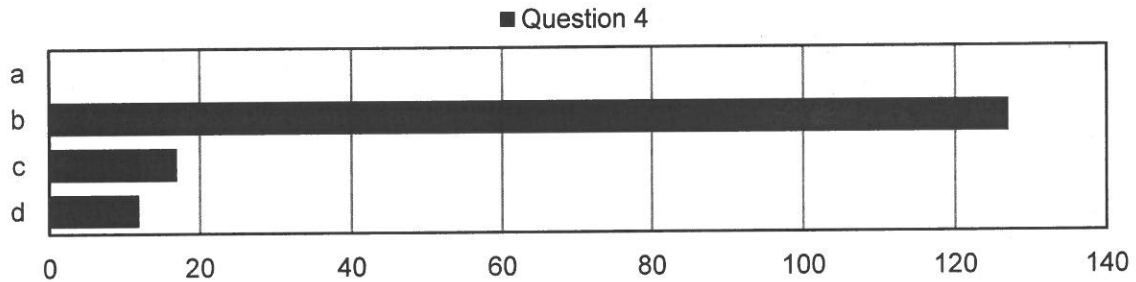
3. How often do you use devotions (for example, the rosary, novenas, stations of the cross, etc.) in your prayer?

- | | |
|---|----|
| a) I use them frequently | 47 |
| b) I rarely use devotions | 47 |
| c) I use devotions on occasion | 49 |
| d) I do not find devotions helpful in my prayer | 1 |



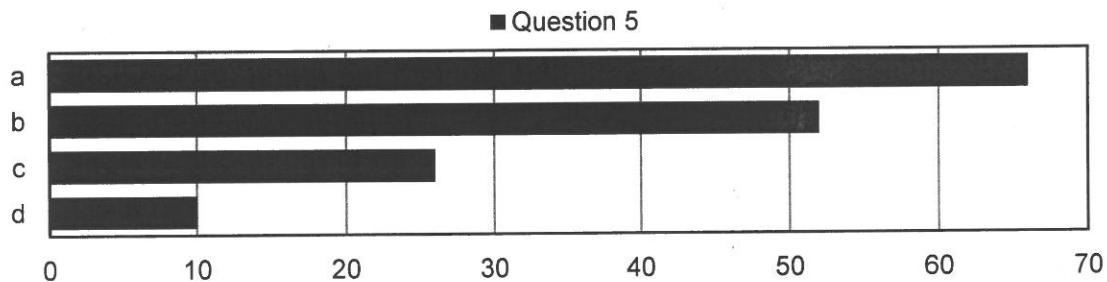
4. How important is your religion to your relationship with God?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| a) I don't belong to a particular religion | 0 |
| b) it is very important in my relationship with God | 127 |
| c) it is sometimes helpful in my relationship with God | 17 |
| d) I don't believe religion is necessary to have a relationship with God | 12 |



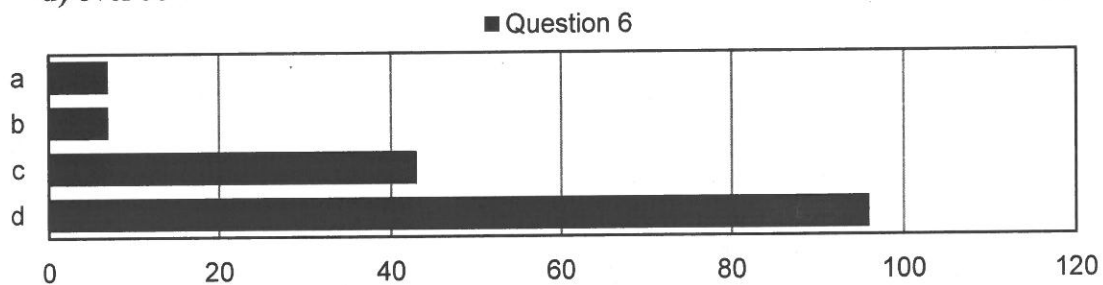
5. Have you ever heard of the "Liturgy of the Hours" (also known as the "Divine Office" or the "breviary"?)

- | | |
|---|----|
| a) I have never heard of it | 66 |
| b) I have heard of it but don't know what it is | 52 |
| c) I know what it is but do not make use of it | 26 |
| d) I know what it is and I use it in my prayer | 10 |



6. What is your age group?

- | | |
|------------|----|
| a) 18-30 | 7 |
| b) 31-40 | 7 |
| c) 41-55 | 43 |
| d) over 55 | 96 |

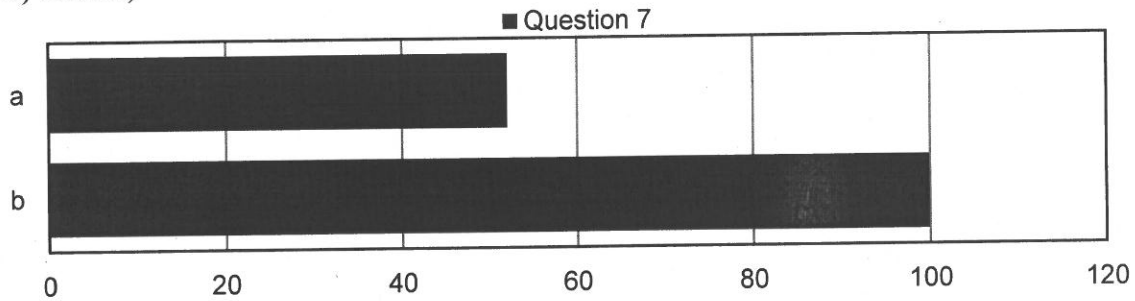


7. What is your gender?

- a) male
b) female)

52

100

**8. How often do you attend Mass?**

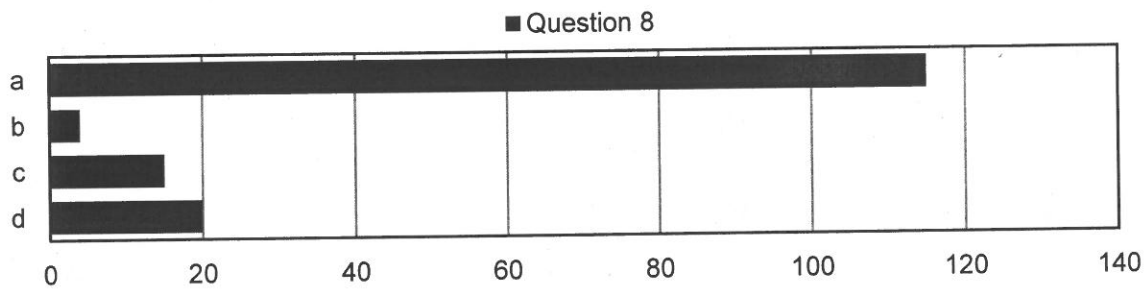
- a) once a week
b) once a month
c) 2-3 times a month
d) more than once a week

115

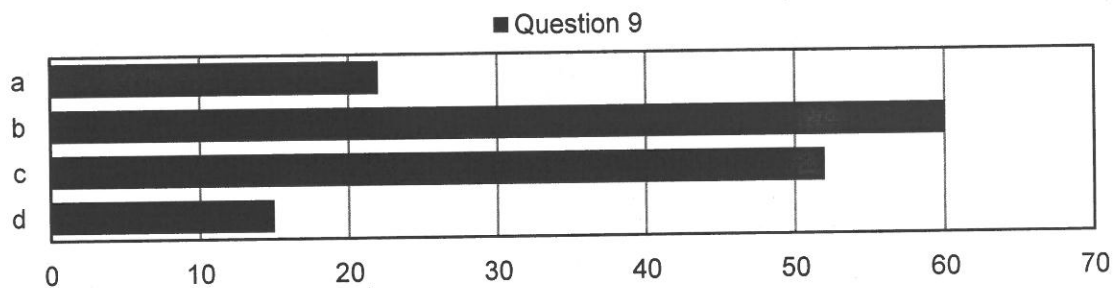
4

15

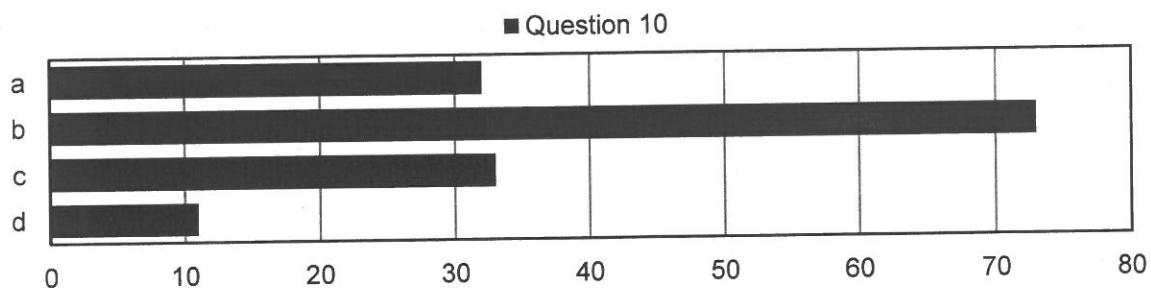
20

**9. I come to Mass to pray for a particular need.**

Strongly Agree 22 Agree 60 Disagree 52 Strongly Disagree 15

**10. I come to Mass to fulfill my Sunday obligation.**

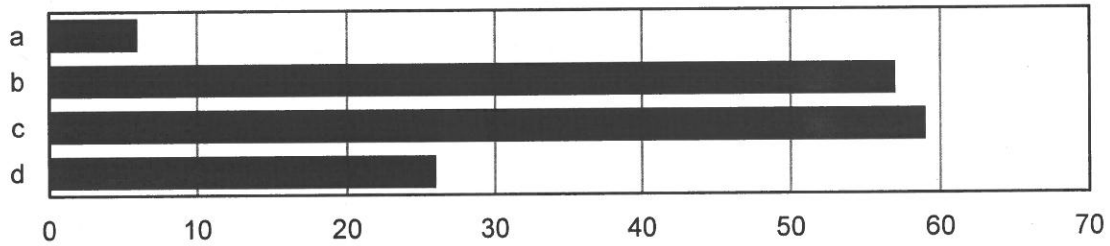
Strongly Agree 32 Agree 73 Disagree 33 Strongly Disagree 11



11. I come to Mass to socialize with the members of the parish community.

Strongly Agree 6 Agree 57 Disagree 59 Strongly Disagree 26

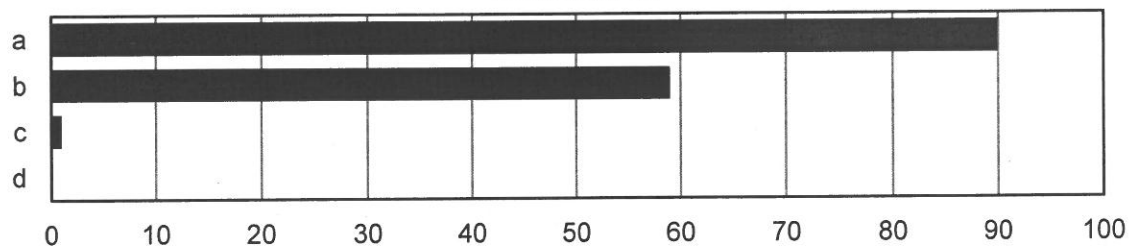
■ Question 11



12. I come to Mass to praise and worship God.

Strongly Agree 90 Agree 59 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree 0

■ Question 12



13. On a scale of 1-5, indicate whether you pray more for your own needs or for the needs of others.

My needs

a)1 0

b)2 12

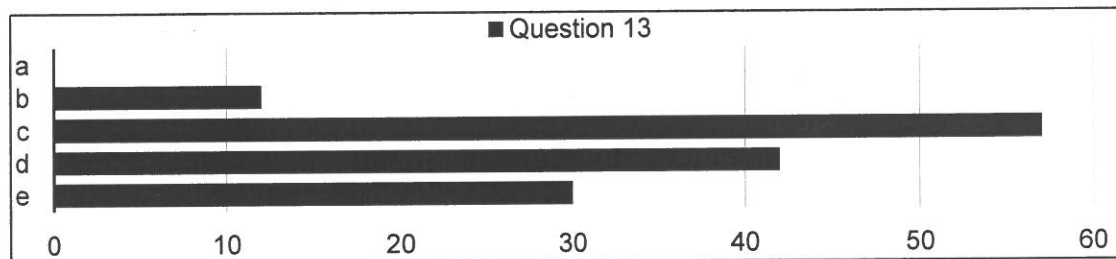
c)3 57

c)4 42

Other's needs

d)5 30

■ Question 13



Analysis of Questions

Question One: Spirituality

The majority of people seemed to understand spirituality as “a process of spiritual growth according to the dictates of one’s religion.” This answer was given by people who are dedicated to following the dictates of their (Catholic) religion. However, two of the possible answers to this question described spirituality as “a person’s search for the sacred apart from the practice of religion,” (option two) or, “trying to live a good life despite what one believes about God” (option four). This significant number (41%) seems to support the premise in chapter two which indicates that spirituality is not connected with religion for many people. Under a handful of respondents chose option three, which delimits spirituality to “something practiced mostly by clergy and religious brothers and sisters,” which indicates that most people understand that spirituality is not limited to clergy and religious.

While the majority of respondents chose the first option, a significant number believe that spirituality can be found apart from one’s religion (option two), which seems to accord with the culture at large, where spirituality is often divorced from religion. The situation suggests the need of the Church to help Catholics understand that spirituality is very much connected with “religion” in the sense that religion deals as much with our connectedness to others as it does to our connectedness with God. It also brings up the question of whether it is possible to cultivate a relationship with God without concretely connecting with others.

The fourth option, “trying to live a good life despite what one believes about God,” that a fair number (22%) chose, indicates that even Catholics who somewhat

regularly participate in liturgical services believe that spirituality may be present even in someone who does not believe in God, that spirituality is simply a way of relating to the world, whether one believes God is present in that world or not. In summary, the responses to this question indicate the subtle, if not overt, influence of forces in the prevailing culture concerning spirituality, the influence of which can be recognized even in Catholic people who practice their faith regularly.

Question Two: Prayer

As to the question soliciting identification of what best describes their prayer, most answered “thanksgiving to God,” with the second highest response being the “praise of God.” The purpose of this question was to determine whether Catholics who overtly practice their faith by at least sporadic attendance at Mass understand it as something directed toward the worship of God or as focused in and on themselves, their needs (expressed in petitionary prayer for particular needs, or prayers begging mercy). The responses that favored praise and thanksgiving to God as the proper direction of prayer came as a surprise in view of the many indications that people petition their Creator mainly to ask for something (option 3 and even option 4). Witness the ever incoming intentions for Mass, requests to religious houses on the “Prayer Line,” and so on.

The survey clearly revealed that practicing Catholics seem to possess a healthy sense that, while prayer can certainly include requests for one’s needs or wants, it is essentially directed toward praise of God’s goodness and generosity. The question might have been narrowed to the purposes of the prayer of the Mass, whether it is understood by the practicing Catholic to be primarily a prayer of praise and thanksgiving or mainly opportunity for prayers of petition. Again, while petitionary prayer is certainly a central

theme throughout the liturgy, the survey reveals that the practicing Catholic understands that the Sunday worship is essentially directed to the glory of God and not merely another vehicle for focusing on personal or worldwide needs.

Question Three: Devotions

The third question turned from the purpose of prayer in general to the question of spiritual expression in devotional prayer. There was an almost even distribution of responses regarding the extent of the expression of spirituality in devotions: frequently (47), rarely (47) or on occasion (49). Only a few confessed to not finding devotions helpful in prayer. The Church document, *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions And Answers* issued by the USCCB November 12, 2013, teaches that “a liturgical celebration is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree,”¹ However, it is clearly recognized that popular devotional practices extend the liturgical life of the Church into daily life.² If almost two-thirds of the people surveyed use devotions frequently or at least on occasion, it seems likely that they might be more willing to learn the Liturgy of the Hours since it can be an attractive prayer form for those who are used to the more traditional forms of devotional prayer, even though it is in fact, liturgical prayer. Whether it is important, however, for people to understand the difference between liturgical and devotional prayer as discussed in Chapter Two and outlined in Chapter Three is questionable in this author’s view. The chapter following will recount a conversation between two parishioners that may shed light on the way some people perceive these two types of prayer.

¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7.

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1675.

Question Four: Relationship with God

Under Question 4, “How important is your religion to your relationship with God?” most responses went to the second option indicating that religion is very important in the lives of the practicing Catholics of the parish. This is not surprising, again coming from country Catholics who regularly practice their religion. Nor is it surprising that no one chose the first option, which disclaimed the practice of any religion. Nor did very many agree that religion is unnecessary for a relationship with God as might have been the belief of some members of the general population outside the parish community. The question, which is at the heart of the theology behind this pastoral project, points to the Church’s need to continue to help people who are not practicing their Christian religion to understand the importance of the community in the relationship with God. The question that remains, however, is if those who answered this question indicating that religion is important to them, understand religion as being a connectedness with others or whether they see it as the acceptance of doctrine and the participation in religious practices.

Question Five: Knowledge of the Liturgy of the Hours

Only about seven percent of those surveyed knew what the Liturgy of the Hours is and make use of it in their prayer. Some know what it is, although they do not make use of it, and the vast majority have never heard of nor make use of it. This does not come as a surprise however. Since the Liturgy of the Hours is part of the official, public prayer of the Church, it is important for us as ministers in the Church to invite more people to an understanding and appreciation of this prayer and to assist them in making it a part of their own prayer life. In the past, it was often coupled with Benediction of the Blessed

Sacrament in a service scheduled for Sunday afternoons. One religious sister recalls regularly being required to forego the Sunday afternoon movies at the local theater to participate in that extension of the liturgy.³ One certain outcome of this survey is the need for ministers in the Church to invite more people to an understanding and appreciation of this prayer and to assist them in making it a part of their own prayer life. To do this would be to help people grow in their understanding of how Catholicism calls everyone to pray for the salvation of the world and cautions against a spirituality that is concerned more with personal needs than those of the community.

Questions Six, Seven, Eight: Age, Gender, Mass Attendance

Questions six, seven and eight were included to obtain some demographic information on those who took the survey. The majority were over 55. The next highest group were those aged 41-55, with 7 respondents being in the age group of 18-30 and 7 between 31-40. The Church has been encouraging the use of the Liturgy of the Hours since Vatican II, but it is obvious that even bona fide members of the Church have not caught on to the meaningfulness of this prayer. It is also of interest, that almost two-thirds of those surveyed were female, which again confirms the commonly held observation that women attend religious services and participate in church-related activities more than men. It is also a well-known fact that many more laywomen are involved in ecclesiastical ministries than men.⁴ Finally, the question inquiring into frequency of Mass attendance reveals that about twenty or so people participate at daily as well as weekend Masses. The majority of parishioners in the country parish that was interviewed attend Mass every weekend, a

³ Witness of a Sister of Notre Dame, March 11, 2014.

⁴ See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_and_women and touchstonemag.com/archives/articles/article.php?id=14 (accessed March 12, 2014).

much higher percentage than a typical suburban parish might report. There are a small number who attend one to three times a month, and this number probably would be much larger in a more typical suburban community.

Question Nine: Purpose of Mass Attendance

More people indicated that they come to Mass for a particular need than those who did not. Looking back at this question, it is not clear why it would be useful for this project. The purpose here was not to ask exactly what kinds of things people pray for, but to discover if they pray more for others or for themselves, which will be answered in the final question.

Question Ten: Obligation of Mass Attendance

This tenth question can also be misleading. About two-thirds of the respondents said they come to Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation and about one-third said they do not. But this question does not go far enough. The original intent was to inquire as to whether or not people came to Mass primarily to fulfill a religious obligation imposed on them or if they come to Mass because they recognize the importance of joining the community of faith in the worship of God, and finding their support to and from those with whom they share faith.

Question Eleven: Socialization and Mass Attendance

Again, the wording of this question is not helpful. More people said they do not come to Mass to socialize with the members of the parish community than those who said they did come for that reason. But again the question was meant to inquire as to whether or not people come to Mass in order to find a need fulfilled in socializing with those who

share their faith or whether they come simply out of obligation to their religious responsibilities.

Question Twelve: Praise

While it is encouraging to note that all but one person agreed or strongly agreed that they come to Mass to praise and worship God, the question is useless since there were no alternative answers other than to say in effect, “No, I don’t come to Mass to praise & worship God.” It is a worded question which originally was meant to inquire as to what motivates people most to come to Mass: to praise and worship God or to offer prayers of petition or even to socialize with people in the community.

Question Thirteen: Intentions in Praying

Finally, the last question may have appeared like a “trick” question of sorts since from its wording it could have seemed to imply that prayer for the needs of others “should” be primary, set before more “selfish” prayers for one’s personal needs. No one answered that they pray only for their own needs while a small number of twelve confessed they pray more for their own needs than that of others. The option to choose the middle number three out of five gained the largest number as it presumed a balanced desire to pray both for one’s own needs and the needs of others. The majority indicated they pray more for the needs of others than they do for their own needs, which may in fact be true, though it seems that the question could have unduly encouraged a response favoring the larger number.

Summary

Results of the Quantitative Method of Data Collection

To summarize the findings of this general survey, the information gathered is helpful when one's ministry is mainly concerned with Catholics who practice their faith on a weekly or at least regular basis, since this was the demographic of the group surveyed. Chapter Two looked at how people in general (religious or not) understand spirituality and religion. This paper has really depended upon the research of others in ascertaining whether most people today, religious or not, understand spirituality as something that primarily concerns an individual's relationship with God (or even just him/herself) or something that is intimately tied to the way we relate to others. That question is really out of the scope of this particular project, though the information others have gleaned has certainly been helpful in understanding this more focused endeavor of targeting a group of active Catholics who are indeed influenced by the individualistic nature of contemporary culture.

In this quantitative method of collecting information, although several questions in this survey proved to be pointless or poorly written, what was found to be most useful were the following three points:

- First, regularly practicing Catholics recognize that worship together is meant mainly to be directed to praise and thanks to God (the primary purpose of Eucharist and a major thrust of the Liturgy of the Hours).
- Second, the understanding of Catholics remains that it is important for us to pray for others, not just for one's own needs. The Liturgy of the Hours is prayer for the salvation of the world, not just a private devotional prayer for ourselves.

- And finally, that the Liturgy of the Hours, while part of the official, public, liturgical prayer of the Church, is prayed by a very small percentage of Catholics, has only been heard of by some and is completely unknown to others.

These three points encourage the conclusion that Catholics are “primed” for the Liturgy of the Hours to be introduced in our parishes so that even when prayed individually, it can extend the liturgy into their daily lives.⁵

Evaluation of Survey of Catechetical Session Members

What was found far less helpful was the survey administered to those who attended the presentations delivered on the Liturgy of the Hours. They were given the very same questionnaire that was administered to the rest of the parish community in the hopes of comparing the results of that particular group both before and after the two catechetical sessions. The second-survey responses of the catechized group after the specialized presentations were extremely close to the answers delivered before the presentations.

Perhaps one example would suffice to verify this observation: Question Five asked: “Have you ever heard of the “Liturgy of the Hours” (also known as the “Divine Office” or the “breviary”?). Before the catechetical sessions, four people responded that they had never heard of it or that they had heard of it but did not know what it was. After the catechetical sessions, four respondents answered in precisely the same way. Since everyone in that group had in fact heard of and learned about the “Hours,” their answers were baffling. The third response to the question was, “I know what it is but do not make use of it” and the same number of people (five) chose this same response both before and

⁵ *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 12.

after the sessions, even though they all admitted when queried that they had made use of the Hours after the presentations. Thus what became evident was that when those who attended the presentations took the questionnaire the second time, they were answering the questions in almost exactly the same way they had before they attended the catechetical sessions. It may have been an omission in the preparatory sessions of the vote not to have mentioned that the catechetical classes and prayer experiences could make a difference in their responses on the second questionnaire. As a result, the data obtained from the catechetical group on this point was excluded from the evaluation of the presentations as it had failed to provide any meaningful or accurate information.

Use of a Qualitative Methodology

Tim Sensing suggests that qualitative methods are preferred for Doctor of Ministry projects, but he encourages the use of quantitative methods if one's project requires it.⁶ Though both methods were employed in the analysis of this project, the qualitative data was found to be much more useful in this particular project. It was shown above that the quantitative data of the survey given to the entire congregation proved to be somewhat helpful in three particular ways, but that the same data used for those who attended the presentations was not helpful at all. However, after the catechetical sessions, both groups of parishioners (those who attended on Sunday mornings and those who attended on Thursday evenings), experienced praying the Office in both the monastic as well as the cathedral style Office. Immediately following the second monastic prayer experience, a mystagogical discussion was held with those in attendance. This allowed the possibility of evaluating both the effectiveness of the catechetical sessions as well as

⁶ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 62.

the fruitfulness of the prayer experiences in depth. Since rather open-ended questions were addressed to this particular group of people, they became the focus group that allowed for the procuring of information that was both general but also specific and which spoke not only to their intellectual understanding of spirituality and the Liturgy of the Hours, but to their emotional and spiritual experience of this particular theology and prayer.

The participants (about fifteen people) were invited to remain seated after this second experience of praying the monastic Office to discuss what the experience was like. About thirty were present at the first praying of the monastic Office, but only about half this number the second time since PSR was back in session and some of the participants were catechists or needed to be with their children. Brief written notes were taken during the discussion and the entire twenty-minute dialogue was taped, while a member of the group (also a catechetical leader) also took some written notes. Questions and relevant points were prepared ahead of time and presented to assure that that they would get across in the catechetical sessions and prayer experiences.

I asked: "Was it easier to pray the Liturgy of the Hours this second time than it was the first?" Most seemed to agree with the statement by one member of the group that it was much easier since the parishioner, who is a catechetical leader (mostly to this group of people on Sunday mornings), had prepared in advance an outline of Lauds for that morning, including the page numbers which corresponded with the Shorter Christian Prayer books they had been given to use (purchased by the parish). Another person had commented that the format for the Hours was found to be overwhelming and very confusing and suggested that it would take a regular "practice" of this prayer to make one

feel comfortable with it. Another commented that she had no clue how to find the right pages when she attempted to pray at home but trusted that others who did know how to pray the correct prayers were doing that for her, so she did her best to use the prayers that seemed to fit best for that day. Yet another said that because he used ibreviary.com, he was able to pray without distraction, knowing that it was all laid out for him on the Internet. It seems that a written guide with page numbers was a big help toward being able to follow an otherwise very confusing format. This reminded me to emphasize again the suggestion that people (or parish) purchase one of the small Ordo's or booklets to guide the prayer according to which particular volume he/she may be using (e.g., *Shorter Christian Prayer*, Volume Four, etc.). This help includes page numbers, which easily helps to find the right place and the right prayers for the day.

In response to the comments regarding how difficult it can be to pray the office correctly, it was suggested that it was better to pray it “wrong” than not to pray it at all. The group was reminded of how confusing it is for a non-Catholic or even a new Catholic to feel really comfortable with the prayer that is at the heart of Catholic faith: the Eucharistic liturgy or Mass. For the first few experiences of a Catholic Mass, most newcomers are lost and confused. They have many questions. It is only after perseverance and frequent attendance do they very gradually become accustomed to the ritual and learn to pray with understanding and fruit. So too with the Divine Office.⁷

⁷ Of course the very best and easiest solution for those who have smartphones would be to download one of the apps available on iTunes or in the Google Play Store for those who use Apple iPhones or Android devices respectively. The only issue with this option is the fact that because of copyright laws, the free apps for these devices use a translation that is slightly different from the one used in the official four-volume Liturgy of the Hours. Such an app would be fine to use if one intends to pray the Office only on one's own or in unison with someone else who is using the same app. However if someone intends to pray the Hours with another or others who are using the four-volume set, the translation is different enough that their words will not be in harmony. This same issue of translation differences is also a concern even

In response to the second question proposed to the group, “What did you learn from this experience or what was this experience like for you?” one parishioner said that prior to the catechetical sessions, she did not know the difference between liturgical and devotional prayer. She said that on those days when she and her children could not attend daily Mass, they now had the option of praying the Liturgy of the Hours at home. In that way, she said, they could still be connected with the liturgical life of the parish even during the week.

One person asked if using the four-volume version of the Hours would be easier since there might be less “moving around” from one ribbon to the next. I pointed out that this would not be the case since the size of the four-volume version makes more reference to the addition of the Proper of Saints and the Office of Readings.

Since much of the discussion related to why people learned from this experience seemed to revolve around the comfort level of those who are just learning to pray the Hours, it was important to emphasize that the goal in introducing the Divine Office to the parish was two-fold: to help people appreciate an “ecclesiology of communion,” i.e., that the Catholic Faith is profoundly communitarian although it can sometimes be developed into a species of individualized spirituality. Secondly, it was one objective of the project that introducing the Liturgy of the Hours would help people to better appreciate the reality that liturgical prayer is focused on the needs of all God’s people, both those within the Church as well as those of the world. They seemed to grasp this connection and although they did not articulate the theological dimension in the initial discussion of this

when people are using a print version of the Hours by various publishers. For example, the translation used in the four-volume set is slightly different from the one used in the Shorter Christian Prayer. Thus, when using either a printed book or an app, those who choose to pray together need to be sure that the translations are in sync lest there be a lack of uniformity in the common prayer.

first question, the point often came to the forefront as the group moved deeper into the mystagogical aspects of praying the Office.

Union with God or with Others?

The second question included first a statement: "Many Catholics complain that they do not find "spirituality" in Catholicism. When asked the question: "How would you define spirituality?" the first person responded that spirituality is "your closeness to the Lord," which was interpreted to mean connectedness to God. The group affirmed this view and agreed that it is achieved through prayer. In response to the question of why some Catholics feel they do not find closeness with God in the practice of the Catholic Faith, one person suggested that it may be because people equate "closeness" with "good emotions." "If I don't feel good and experience cozy feelings, then I'm not finding God" was proposed as a clarification of her response. It was pointed out that many evangelical churches seem to draw people to their worship by way of the music they offer, which creates an emotional connection among people. The parishioner agreed and said, "People say Catholicism is boring. They don't get anything out of the Mass if it doesn't entertain them." Another person remarked that when Catholics are asked, "Where do you find fellowship?" they recognize that the questioners mainly seek the social dimension of faith. In summary it was agreed that some seek relationship with the Divine and others, social connections.

Finally the group was challenged by the core question, "When it comes to spirituality, are people talking about their relationship with God or with others?" One woman commented that, "Even people who don't go to a church talk about spirituality, which to them, simply means feeling good." Finally another parishioner observed: "I love

to go to other churches because they love to praise God. But, although they may have a beautiful house, they're missing the furniture! They don't have the Eucharist! Their services are extracurricular, whereas Mass is central for us."

In summary of that segment of the discussion, it was agreed that spirituality is that which helps us to connect with God even as it binds us with others so that we can connect with God through and with them. At that point it was observed that the cross, a primary Christian symbol, graphically demonstrates a fundamental understanding of Catholic ecclesiology: the intersection of its lines suggest the horizontal connectedness with others that brings us to vertical relationship with the Divine.

Spiritual or Religious?

Broadening the aforementioned theme, several related questions surfaced: "As a practicing Catholic, how would you respond to someone who said that they are 'spiritual but not religious'? Can one be a disciple of Jesus without belonging to the Church? What do some people mean when they say 'I'm spiritual but not religious?'" One woman declared, "They believe in God but don't worship at any church." Another said, "They think religion is a private thing; they're good people and they don't need all the rest. Do they even understand what being spiritual really is?" A man in the group whose observation evoked a response of laughter, added, "It means 'I'll keep my union card but I won't put in the time.'" Someone else commented that "They [such people] don't want to be told what to do. It's hard to be a Catholic. No one else has the rules that we have. But they are necessary because you have to work at being a Catholic and put yourself into it." Another gentleman added, "We should say we have a way of life, not rules." Yet

another agreed and commented that Pope Francis emphasizes our need to attract people with our love and joy, not tell people what to do by our rules.

Further reflection on the idea brought out that to be “spiritual but not religious” may be someone’s way of saying that it’s important to connect with God, but not necessarily through a community or institution. Yet, it was pointed out, that is precisely how we connect with God: by connecting with others. When asked if the discussion had helped to understand the importance of a communal spirituality, the group nodded their heads in affirmation and agreed with one person’s statement that while they would not necessarily have been able to articulate it in that way, as Catholics, they do appreciate the importance of the community, of the Church (understood as Christian community and as “religious institution”) in the living out of their Christian faith.

Individual or Communal?

The fourth issued raised was whether the Liturgy of the Hours is devotional (personal) prayer or liturgical (communal) prayer, and why? This garnered only one response with everyone nodding again in agreement: “It’s liturgical because it’s the official prayer of the Church as we pray for others in the world.” There followed a brief discussion of the importance of allowing each period of prayer to lead to the broader world of others. The idea was clarified that the Liturgy of the Hours can be both devotional and communal prayer: devotional since it can be prayed on one’s own, but always liturgical since, as the official prayer of the Church prayed by Catholics throughout the world, it is always prayed in communion with others.

Final Questions

The final questions were practical: "Does the complexity of the breviary discourage you from praying the Office on your own? Is it too complicated? Does it scare you away?" Several people remarked that it IS complicated, but if they have some sort of guide to follow (such as the Ordo or even a handout with page numbers), this is extremely helpful. They agreed that at least initially it is important to be patient and just keep praying it in common in order to gain the confidence to pray it on their own. A ninety-year old woman said that the "Guide for Christian Prayer" (the ordo for the Hours) makes it easy for her as she just follows the page numbers included in the guide. In conclusion, the group was asked if they will use this prayer in their own personal and/or communal (parish) prayer. All without exception agreed that they would like to try to incorporate it either in their own daily prayer or in a common praying of the Office that they can offer as fellow parishioners.

Conclusion

Altogether the discussion among the parishioners who entered into the project was honest, open, direct, and at times, emotional when people expressed their love for their Catholic Faith and confusion over why more Catholics do not practice their faith regularly or find that other denominations seem to feed them spirituality more than Catholicism. While it may be somewhat difficult to gauge exactly how communal or ecclesial the spirituality of these members currently is or how much the praying of the Hours may help them in this direction, it was evident that they possess a faith that longs for an intimate connection with God and which seems to understand the importance of a community to support that relationship with the Divine.

It is important, however, to keep in mind that the group of people who volunteered to participate in this project are already committed to a faith that not only adheres to participation in the weekly Mass, but also often includes daily Mass, and the desire to increase their understanding of Catholicism through the weekly and seasonal catechetical opportunities offered by the parish. These are the Catholics who really “get” what Church is all about and who, it is anticipated will be the catalyst for encouraging others to experience the same satisfaction they receive in their devotion to God and their commitment to the Church.

CHAPTER V

The Liturgy of the Hours in the Parish Today

When first pondering the type of project that would be beneficial in my ministry, especially in the ministerial context of parochial leadership, I was initially drawn to introducing the Liturgy of the Hours to a parish community since it seemed to me that this “extension to the liturgy”¹ was blatantly missing from the liturgical life of most parishes. A majority of parishioners in a typical parish seems ignorant of this form of prayer and remain thereby completely deprived of its potential fruitfulness. (Some clergy light-heartedly jest about their failure to pray the Office, excusing themselves of the promise of daily recitation made at ordination, completely overlooking the fact that fruitfulness in their ministry radically depends on prayer.)² But what better prayer than that which is prayed universally in the Church in support of the core mission of Jesus, to proclaim the Gospel for the salvation of the world?

I had for some time been curious about the reason for the gross neglect of this official, liturgical prayer in the life of the Church. In the years following Vatican II, there has been a great emphasis on the liturgy as the “source and summit” of the Christian life.³ Yet while much effort had properly been placed upon the study and planning of the Eucharistic liturgy, so little time and attention seem to have been directed on the

¹ *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 12, <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/GILH.pdf>.

² See Psalm 127:1 NRSV: “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain.”

³ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, On the Mystery of the Church. (1965), 11, Vatican, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council_documents/Vat_ii_const_1964_41121_lumengentium_en.html (accessed Mar. 13, 2014).

parochial level toward its extension into the daily life of the Church's members through the Liturgy of the Hours, which, like the Eucharistic liturgy, the Council reformed. While the new Hours maintain their historical structure, the Council heightened their simplicity and beauty and made navigation through their pages easier and less time-consuming, thus allowing a more facile integration into the busy lifestyle of today's clergy and people.

While it was beyond the intention of this project to pursue the exact and likely varied reasons for the lackadaisical attitude toward the Church's official daily prayer, what began to emerge from my desire to introduce this prayer to a parish community was the discovery of a less than ideal underlying spirituality, theology and ecclesiology of the faithful that may contribute to the absence of this liturgical prayer for individuals and parish communities.⁴ And as research for this project progressed, it was this recognition of the widespread existence of an individualistic spirituality which slowly emerged but which became the dominant focus underlying my desire to bring the Liturgy of the Hours back to its proper place in the prayer life of clergy and parish communities.

Defining Spirituality

Chapter Two discussed the importance of beginning with a clear understanding of spirituality since the word holds many definitions and concepts. In a nutshell, Adele Gonzales put it this way: "Because Christian spirituality is our life with the spirit, it

⁴ In the Diocese of Cleveland, a parish questionnaire is filled out every year called the "Status Animarium." It gathers information on such things as liturgical practices. A tally of the use of the *Liturgy of the Hours* by parishes in the Diocese as reported for the year 2013 reported thirty-two parishes using the *Liturgy of the Hours* at some time during the year. Of the total of 185 parishes listed on "The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Fact Sheet" posted on its website (www.dioceseofcleveland.org) dated June 30, 2013. Thirteen parishes pray the Liturgy of the Hours seasonally, such as during Advent, Christmas, Lent or Holy Week. Nineteen parishes pray the Liturgy of the Hours on a weekly or daily schedule.

implies relationships, all relationships.”⁵ This all-important point is contrary to a culture that is increasingly individualistic and self-focused, one in which the primacy of relationships takes a back seat to the pursuit of one’s own happiness and fulfillment, which ironically cannot possibly be found outside of a web of relationships. Though many think of spirituality as the consciousness of their own spirit (not necessarily created by or related to a Divine Being), or perhaps see spirituality as their personal relationship with a Supreme Being, many people today understand spirituality as a relationship that must include our neighbor. Again, Gonzales captures this succinctly:

I cannot claim to have a healthy relationship with God and myself if I ignore those around me. Traditionally the word "neighbor" meant the person who lived in my neighborhood or on my block. Jesus extended the meaning of the word to include anyone who helps a person in need. By neighbor, I mean any human being who shares planet earth with me.

Since volumes have been written on the meaning of spirituality, it is necessary to define the word in the context of this project. First, it does not denote piety, personal devotions or a desire to be “other worldly” (with or without a belief in God). Rather it is used here to mean a desire for an integrated relationship with God and equally with one’s neighbor, without which a relationship with God is not even possible. “Christianity is a communal faith....God did not make a covenant with individual Hebrews one by one, but with a people.”⁶ Hence, the title of this paper begins: “Encouraging an Ecclesiology of Communion....” Then it states *one* way in which that understanding of Church can be encouraged: “by introducing the Liturgy of the Hours to a Parish Community.” Again, what started as a ministerial project (helping a parish use the Liturgy of the Hours),

⁵ Gonzales, *The Spirituality of Community*, 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

expanded for me into recognition of a more foundational need—a discussion of what it means to be Church. But ecclesiology cannot be defined without a proper understanding of the spirituality that underlies it. The role of theology here is to study how the current spirituality of Catholics is influenced by both religious and non-religious people in the wider community or society. How does culture influence our understanding of spirituality and even our ecclesiology?

Individualism in Current Society

Perusal of books, magazine articles, Church documents, and other media available today (movies, the internet, etc) recommended by persons in and out of Catholic circles made me aware of how much is in fact written or said about the individualism rampant in our culture and of its profound influence on the perception of ecclesiology by Catholics. One obvious trend current today to speak of oneself as being “spiritual but not religious” implies not only a desire many have to disassociate themselves from an official religion or institution, but also to seek a relationship within themselves or even with God which does not “bind” them to a community (i.e., a “religion”) or to a deep or lasting relationship with the “neighbor.” Unless and until more Catholic people become aware of this trend in our culture, there is danger that many may become seduced by a spirituality that is individualistic, centered exclusively on personal relationship with God, and perhaps separated from the community, which binds us together as one. If the purpose of Jesus’ announcement of the Kingdom of God was simply to invite individuals to a life of holiness, there would be no need for the Church, other than as an institution which dispenses the sacraments as personal encounters with the Divine Giver of grace.

The Catholic Concept of Church

Our Catholic ecclesiology stands against the trend to regard church as an exclusive, personal and individual experience of the Divine Presence. Again, in the pointed words of Gonzales, “Christian life is profoundly social. It is communitarian.” This must be a constant “theme” addressed in our preaching, in our catechetical programs for both children and adults, and in our liturgical practices. Remembering the often repeated principle, “Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi,” loosely translated, “What we pray is what we believe and what we believe is what we live,” if we pray liturgically, we need to pray as a body of people who find unity in Christ and exist not exclusively for themselves, but for drawing into their community the whole world.

The thesis of this project was to propose promotion of an ecclesiology of communion through the liturgical prayer of the *Liturgy of the Hours*. As reported the last chapter, the mystagogical discussion held with the group who engaged in the catechesis and practice of the Liturgy of the Hours indicates that this prayer can in fact encourage an ecclesiology of communion in the lives of those Catholics who are willing to participate in liturgical prayer opportunities.

Caveats

Of course, it must be noted that the catechesis and practice of the church’s liturgical prayer introduced to help form the spirituality of people in the parish, were embraced by a very small percentage of parishioners, people who, in fact, were already the more active parishioners, many of whom even attend daily Mass. The presumption is that they, perhaps more than most other parishioners, would already possess a proper understanding of the communal nature of the Church, given their pre-project participation

in daily Mass and prayer rituals outside of Mass and their willingness to participate in catechetical opportunities such as this one. The discussion held after praying the monastic form of the Hours pointed to their pre-formed understanding of authentically ecclesial spirituality. Although it is true that people can always deepen their ecclesiology and sharpen their focus on the importance of community, the question remains whether the attempt made in this project to introduce the Liturgy of the Hours in the parish really reaches out enough to its “general population” who by and large do not regularly attend daily or weekend Mass or other liturgical events outside of the weekend liturgy, if that. The other question that also needs to be asked is whether people praying the Liturgy of the Hours do in fact deepen their communal spirituality, the objective of this project. The discussions that took place during the mystagogy seemed to indicate that this is true, however some sort of quantitative data in this regard may be more objective.

Further Exploration

Even those who exhibit a spirituality developed beyond what is mandated, for instance by attending daily Mass, may be deficient in understanding and practicing the community dimensions of their liturgical participation. Since working on this project, I was transferred to another assignment as Pastor of a large (2000-family) parish in Cleveland, Ohio. As I began to celebrate daily Mass there, I noticed something that disturbed me, especially as my attention has been focused in recent months on the importance of community in liturgical practice.

Superficially United

The new surroundings include a “daily Mass chapel” which is in the body of the church, but off to the right side in an area that is somewhat distinct from the rest of the

church although not separated by a wall of any kind. What I noticed was that during daily Mass, where about 25 to 30 people are seated in chairs in front of the “chapel” altar which faces the opposite direction of the main altar of the church, three to five people habitually sit in the pews of the church at large--to the left of the daily Mass area. They “attend” Mass, choosing to remain distinctly apart from the rest of the worshipping people (community). They join in the proper responses in unison with the others directly in front of the side altar, but they are physically separated from the area in which the liturgy is being celebrated.

When one of these parishioners approached me one morning to ask a question, I took the opportunity to inquire why she sits in the main body of the church instead of joining the rest of the congregation in front of the altar at the daily Mass. At first she claimed that when she comes in late, she doesn’t want to disturb anyone—a noble sentiment evincing sensitivity to the other parishioners. However, when I suggested that the circumstance of her tardiness seems to happen only on occasion, she could not (or would not) give a more precise reason for why she sits apart from the rest of the assembly. I thought that perhaps she wanted to use a kneeler during the Eucharistic prayer, since only chairs are set up in the chapel area, but there are others who simply kneel on the floor next to or in front of their chairs. With as much pastoral sensitivity, patience and tolerance as I could muster, I shared with her how I feel when I see her and others sitting apart for daily Mass. I suggested it was like going to my dad’s house for a Christmas dinner where everyone is seated together at the dining room table while a couple of people choose instead to eat at the kitchen table because of some conflict they are having with another family member. There was not much of a verbal or even facial

response to my homey illustration, and since then, no change either in her choice of seating for daily Mass. That parishioner and several others come over for Communion at the proper time and then return to their seats, keeping their distance from those who have just received the same Body of Christ as an expression of unity in the “one body, one spirit” in Christ.

Such behavior suggests the influence of an individualistic spirituality, lacking in appreciation of the communal nature of the Church, and either faulty theological grounding or unwillingness/inability to alter thinking and behavior. Such resistance revealed so blatantly in the physical aspects of communal participation in liturgy and perhaps in parish life requires of a pastor and other church members much patience, tolerance and perseverance in counteracting the cultural or personal causes of such resistance. When I shared this incident with a seminary professor, he told of his own experience of a similar situation whereby he informed those sitting apart from the rest of the congregation, that he does not consider them really being part of the Mass, given their distance from the rest of the community.

The Search for a Better Way

Gilbert Ostdiek suggests two models for liturgical catechesis, which I believe may have been more effective than the traditional model I used in this project. My beginning presentation consisted of two parts (i.e., on two separate days) which offered catechetical lessons, first, on the theme of a communal spirituality, and then on the more practical catechesis of the geography of praying the Liturgy of the Hours. This was followed by the actual experience of praying the Hours, twice in the traditional monastic form, and then in the style of the Cathedral Office. The latter style allowed for greater flexibility

and pastoral adaptation to the unique assembly participating in the prayer. Following the prayer experiences using the monastic model, we had a mystagogical discussion on what was experienced.

An Early Model

Ostdiek discusses a model of mystagogical catechesis that I wished I had known about before launching this project. It was in use in the final stage of Christian Initiation some 1500 years ago. He writes that before initiation of a new Christian, there was a long period of formation in Christian living and faith that included life within the Christian community, prayer with that community and the experience of service prompted by the shared life and prayer. Instructions in Christian living were given, but these excluded a catechesis on how the celebration of the sacraments would unfold.

The rites of the Church at the Easter Vigil were something of a mystery to such catechumens as only the barest explanations of what was going to happen were proffered to them beforehand. The intention here was to allow those entering the Church to *experience* the rites, not have them explained to them. This would come later, after the celebrations of Holy Week.⁷

After the Easter celebration, the neophytes would meet with the bishop to receive a more detailed explanation of what took place and to reflect with him on what was experienced. Ostdiek says, "The actual experience of the liturgical rites is the starting point and central focus of the catechesis of the liturgy. Those rites can be celebrated effectively without an extensive catechesis beforehand."⁸ He points out that it is hard to

⁷ Gilbert Ostdiek *Catechesis for Liturgy*, (Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 1986), 14.

⁸ Ibid, 15.

talk about something you haven't experienced and so in this model, most of the catechesis is done following the experience of the celebration itself. He writes that this approach is very much part of the ancient tradition of our Catholic history.⁹

A Contemporary Model

Ostdiek also writes of a second model which closely resembles the first but which is more contemporary and was developed by Thomas Groome who calls this method "shared Christian praxis."¹⁰ Again he emphasizes, "[W]e allow what we have learned from our own experience to enter into true dialogue with tradition to reconstruct it and give it new life in our context."¹¹ The goal here is to have the past and present flow together and this author outlines a method for liturgical catechesis that includes three steps: attending to what we and others actually experience at liturgy, reflecting on what our experience and that of others means, and then applying what we have learned to future celebrations of the liturgy. He adds that "liturgical instruction should provide a setting in which the community can reflect together on the meaning that action has for them."¹²

A New Path

Based upon these insights, which draw on both ancient tradition as well as modern methods of catechesis, I would have approached the catechetical piece of this project in a different way. I could have started with a presentation on the history of the Liturgy of the Hours (as was suggested above--where some instruction was given

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, 16.

¹² Ibid, 21.

beforehand, except for reference to the actual prayer itself). Then the experience of praying the Liturgy of the Hours (in both the monastic and cathedral styles) would follow with the “barest explanations” of what this means or how it is done (as the overwhelming details pertaining to the praying of the monastic office could—and did—overshadow the experience of the prayer itself). Finally, the mystagogical discussion could include a detailed explanation of the “how to” of the praying of the Hours, once we reflected on the meaning of the experience itself. It is clear to me now that I was so caught up in the catechetical piece of the project, that the actual experience of praying the Hours, especially in the monastic style, seemed to obscure the meaning of our prayer.

Though I reminded those present at the catechetical presentations that it would take time to learn the routine just as it takes time for non-Catholics to learn to pray the Mass, this may have been of little comfort as it was clear from these two encounters that there was still some confusion and hesitation with regard to the complexity of navigating the breviary even in the *Shorter Christian Prayer*. A book listed in the bibliography of this paper has the following outline or “General Technique” for praying Morning and Evening Prayer during Ordinary Time. Though the purpose of the publication was to simplify the process, just the length of the instruction suggests its complexity.

A Simplified Navigation?

GENERAL TECHNIQUE for Praying Morning and Evening Prayer

Make the Sign of the Cross.

Beginning of Office of Morning Prayer

Say, "Lord, open my lips."

Respond, "And my mouth will proclaim your praise.»

Pray the Antiphon for the Invitatory.

Pray the Invitatory as taught in Lesson 24.
End the Invitatory with the "Glory Be" prayed in full.

Beginning of Office of Evening Prayer

Say, "God, come to my assistance."
Respond, "Lord, make haste to help me."
Pray the "Glory Be" all the way through to the end.
Say "Alleluia." (Omit "Alleluia" during Lent.)

Both Offices Continue As Follows:

Sing, chant, or recite the Hymn you have chosen.

Pray Antiphon 1.
Pray the first Psalm or Canticle (or section thereof).
Pray the "Glory Be."
Say the Psalm-Prayer if one follows.
Repeat Antiphon 1.

Pause briefly for silent reflection.

Pray Antiphon 2.
Pray the second Psalm or Canticle (or section thereof).

Say the "Glory Be."
Say the Psalm-Prayer if one follows.
Repeat Antiphon 2.

Pause briefly for silent reflection.

Say Antiphon 3.
Pray the third Psalm or Canticle (or section thereof).
Pray the "Glory Be."
Pray the Psalm-Prayer if one follows.
Repeat Antiphon 3.

Pause briefly for silent reflection.

Read the Reading.
Read the Responsory.

Pause briefly for silent reflection.

Pray the Antiphon for the Canticle of Zechariah (Morning Prayer) or the Canticle of Mary (Evening Prayer).

Pray the Canticle all the way through as taught in Lessons 22 and 23.
 Pray the full "Glory Be."
 Repeat the Antiphon for the Canticle of Zechariah (Morning Prayer) or the Canticle of Mary (Evening Prayer).

Pause briefly for silent reflection.

Pray the Intercessions.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray the Concluding Prayer.

End with the Dismissal as written on the Psalter bookmark, ending with the Sign of the Cross.¹³

From this “simplified” instruction, one can understand how confusing and involved the praying of a single Hour of the Office can be! For that reason, I would have preferred to focus on the meaning of this liturgical prayer in the catechetical presentations, and then following some experiences of praying the Hours, deliver a more detailed explanation of how the breviary is used, emphasizing the use of tools such as the Ordo to help in guiding people to the right pages, or to the use of a Smartphone app, which avoids the necessity of going back and forth in the breviary.

Another Learning Experience

Following is another observation I had before leaving the parish where this project was implemented. After morning Mass, three parishioners and I went out to breakfast. At one point, a parishioner (whom I’ll call “Tom”) asked another parishioner (whom I’ll refer to as “Pete”) if they could pray the Liturgy of the Hours together before daily Mass. He asked this since Pete has been leading a small group of people in the

¹³ Madeline Pecora Nugent, *The Divine Office for Dodos: A Step-by-Step Guide to Praying the Liturgy of the Hours* (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2008), 72-73.

rosary every day before Mass for some time. One could sense that Pete was not very happy with the idea.

Pete is a devout Catholic in his late 50's. While Catholic his whole life, he left the practice of the faith when younger, but at some point resumed his Catholic way of life, crediting this "conversion" to the rosary. He attended both presentations I gave on the Liturgy of the Hours and one of the prayer times with the group. After one presentation, he asked me for help in learning how to pray the Hours using a one-volume breviary given to him a few years ago. It was still in pristine condition as he did not know how to use it. He made several comments after the presentation concerning how difficult it was to maneuver the breviary and jokingly, how it "didn't have enough ribbons!" But as Tom pressed the issue of praying the Office before morning Mass, one could see that Pete was becoming defensive about his morning routine. He made mention of the fact that he had been leading the rosary before Mass for several years, arriving at 8:00 a.m. and making sure that the rosary would be completed by Mass time at 8:30 a.m. I reminded Pete at this breakfast that while devotional prayer is good and necessary, and, like the rosary, can be prayed in common, the *Liturgy of the Hours* would be more appropriate before daily Mass since it is by its very nature liturgical and communal. Tom continued to press the issue with Pete, and Pete made the comment, with a half-smile, that he was being accused of being selfish because he wanted to stick with the prayer that had been part of his routine for many years.

It is obvious that Pete was most willing to learn about and pray the *Liturgy of the Hours*. He had attended the Sunday morning presentations, bringing his own book to ask questions about how to use it. He understands that it is the official prayer of the Church

and seems to have the intention of praying it alone at home as well as with other parishioners in the church. Yet Pete was not keen on replacing his morning rosary with the *Liturgy of the Hours*. Even though he knows that the rosary is a devotional, personal prayer (even when prayed in common with others), and that the Liturgy of the Hours is a liturgical, communal prayer, he is unwilling to drop his personal devotion in favor of the official prayer of the Church.

Why? He certainly is knowledgeable about the difference between the two forms of prayers. He reminded those at breakfast that, since he offers his rosaries for the needs of others, he is not simply praying for his own needs. As one who cantors each week at Mass, Pete is clearly a community-centered person. Why then the reluctance to exchange a liturgical prayer offered with the community before and in connection with the full liturgy of the Eucharist for one that is devotional? Why do personal devotions have such staying power? Is adherence to them a healthy sign of faith or a sign of the inroads of an individualistic culture?

I do not know the answer to these questions, but find them interesting to ask and discuss in the midst of a project that seeks to popularize communal ecclesiology over the present day draw to individual preferences. Does a private devotion like the rosary lead to and flow from the source and summit of the Church's life, the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy? Does the Liturgy of the Hours do this better or more appropriately somehow? Perhaps someone like Pete has information about the Liturgy of the Hours but has not yet been formed in its communal spirituality. While there is an intellectual "conversion", it has not made that long spiritual journey from the head to the heart.

Looking Ahead

As mentioned above, I received an assignment at another parish in the Diocese very shortly after implementing this project. It will be interesting to check back in a few months to see if the original small group of volunteers or the project are still praying the *Liturgy of the Hours* on a regular or scheduled basis, and whether the group has grown.¹⁴ It will also be of interest to inquire as to the new Pastor's involvement or encouragement of this new liturgical practice. Will the new Pastor pray the monastic office with parishioners before Mass or prior to parish meetings? Will he offer and preside at Cathedral Office style prayer services, especially on select Sundays and during the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter Seasons? Will the Deacon pray with these parishioners in the morning, instruct those who are interested in learning the *Liturgy of the Hours* and perhaps lead the people in this prayer when the Pastor is not available for daily Mass? Perhaps the small group of Secular Franciscans at the parish who already use the breviary could also be of help to those who wish to learn its use. These questions can be answered only in the future, but my prayer and hope is that they will find a positive response as the people of the parish grow in their understanding of a communal faith that is optimally expressed and fostered in the liturgical prayer of the Church for the salvation of the world.

¹⁴ Sensing: "For the change to sustain itself over time, it needs to be integrated into the life of the community. Unless research participants take systematic steps to incorporate changed procedures into the ongoing life of the organization, changes are likely to be short-lived and to have little impact."

APPENDIX A

Presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours, November 2013

Part I

1. The Call of the Scriptures to Pray Always
2. The Mission of the Church: To Pray for the Salvation of the World
2. The Liturgy of the Hours as Liturgical Prayer

Part II

3. Learning How to Pray the Breviary
 1. The Invitatory
 2. The Office of Readings ("Matins")
 3. Morning Prayer ("Lauds")
 4. Daytime Prayer
 5. Evening Prayer ("Vespers")
 6. Night Prayer ("Compline")
 7. A Few Words About the Psalms
5. Monastic & Cathedral Styles
6. Using the Liturgy of the Hours in Devotional Prayer
7. Incorporating the Liturgy of the Hours in Our Parish

Resources on the Liturgy of the Hours:

Online:

- "Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions":
http://www.fdlc.org/liturgy_resources/liturgy_of_the_hours.htm
- "On the Breviary" (EWTN): <http://www.ewtn.com/expert/answers/breviary.htm>

Books:

- Bassinot, Georges-Albert. *Companion Prayer Book to the Liturgy of the Hours*. New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2010.
- Sullivan, Shirley. *Practical Guide for the Liturgy of the Hours*. New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2008.
- Mick, Lawrence E., *How We Worship: The Eucharist, The Sacraments & the Hours*. Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2009.
- Nugent, Madeline Pecora. *The Divine Office for Dodos: A Step-By-Step Guide to Praying the Liturgy of the Hours*. New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2008.
- Gonzalez, Adele J. *The Spirituality of Community*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Miller, Charles E. *Together in Prayer: Learning to Love the Liturgy of the Hours*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Scott Publishers, 2004.
- General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, 2 February, 1971, Congregation of Divine Worship.

APPENDIX B

Part I (First Presentation)

1. The Call of the Scriptures to Pray Always

Basis in Scripture:

- Luke 18:1: “Then he told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary.” (Parable of the Persistent Widow)
- Eph. 6:18: “At every opportunity pray in the Spirit, using prayers and petitions of every sort.”
- Acts 1:14: “Together they devoted themselves to constant prayer.”
- Eph. 6:19: “Pray constantly and attentively for all in the holy company.”
- I Thes. 5:17: “Never cease praying, render constant thanks: such is God’s will for you.”
- James 5:16: “Pray for one another that you may find healing.”
- Luke 18:7: “Will not God do justice to his chosen who call out to him day and night?”

—From the beginning, the early Christians had set specific times for their prayers, following in the Jewish tradition. The Acts of the apostles shows the disciples, like the Jews, praying three times a day: in the morning, around noon, and in the evening. See Acts 3:1; 10:9 (Boissinot)

—The corporate prayer of Israel has become the corporate prayer of the church. (Miller); even Jesus prayed (& quoted) the psalms

—Over time, these daily prayers became “codified” or very structured as they began to be used in monasteries (even Diocesan priests use the prayer modeled on that in monasteries)

—*Many religions* share fixed hours of prayer: Jews pray at 3 distinct hours, Muslims pray 5x day

—Why? To keep the flame of desire from extinguishing & to glorify God:

“From a Letter to Proba from St. Augustine, bishop”: *“Let us always desire the happy life from the Lord God and always pray for it. But for this very reason we turn our mind to the task of prayer at appointed hours, since that desire grows lukewarm, so to speak, from our involvement in other concerns and occupations. We remind ourselves through the words of prayer to focus our attention on the object of our desire; otherwise, the desire that began to grow lukewarm may grow chill altogether and may be totally extinguished unless it is repeatedly stirred into flame.”* (emphasis mine, Office of Readings, Vol. IV, p. 412)

—Robert Taft, SJ: *“In every time, in every land and from every race; in the privacy of the home, in desert or cave, in peasant hut and hermit cell, in Gothic choir or country chapel, in concentration camp or jungle mission-station; every every hour around the clock someone raises his or her voice in the prayer of the Church, to join with the heavenly and earthly choirs down through the ages in the glorification of almighty God.”* (p. 209 in the Sourcebook for 2013)

—“Popular devotional practices play a crucial role in helping to foster this ceaseless prayer. The faithful have always used a variety of practices as a means of permeating everyday life with prayer to God. Examples include pilgrimages, novenas, processions and celebrations in honor of Mary and the other saints, the

rosary, the Angelus, the Stations of the Cross, the veneration of relics, and the use of sacramentals. Properly used, popular devotional practices do not replace the liturgical life of the Church; rather, they extend it into daily life.”¹

2. The Mission of the Church: to Pray for the Salvation of the World

—for Catholics, prayer is more than just for ourselves...

—Pope Francis speaks about the duty of priests to pray for the Church & the world: “...when you offer prayers of praise and thanks to God throughout the hours of the day, not only for the people of God but for the world—remember then that you are taken from among men and appointed on their behalf for those things that pertain to God.” (From the ordination homily by Pope Francis at the Vatican Basilica on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 21, 2013.)

—but all the baptized who share in the “priesthood of the faithful,” are also called to offer prayer each day for others. “All of us need to offer a priestly prayer each day. We pray as priests every time we sacrifice self-interest for the good of the community.” (Rolheiser)

—Liturgical prayer (our official, ritualistic prayer) seeks to raise us above and behind our own limited world to be like Jesus to open his arms on the cross to embrace everyone. We not only pray for others, but we pray in their persons. (Miller)

—“Morning prayer and evening prayer are not prayers that we say for ourselves, nor indeed prayers whose formulae we need to find meaningful or relevant. They don't have to be relevant for our private lives. We pray them as elders, as baptized adults, as priests, to invoke God's blessing upon the world.” (Rolheiser)

—“We can readily pray psalms which fit our moods and our needs, but what do we do when the psalm is totally different from how we are thinking or feeling? The liturgy calls us to pray this psalm not only for people who are in desperate situations, but in their persons, to become their heart and their voice before God. Some of these people turn to God in prayer, if not in the words of the psalm, at least in its sentiments. Some of these people may never think of God. I want to pray in their stead.” (Miller)

—e.g., “Psalm 88 yields ready application to many forms of human misery. I think of little children, hidden in their mothers womb, who are threatened with abortion when I say this psalm.” (Miller)

—See pages 32 & 49 for several examples of how the psalms help us pray for others (“Together in Prayer” by Miller)

—Many years after the return from the exile, people prayed Psalm 126 in their own name, even though they were not historically part of the original event. (Miller, p. 37)

—Jesus could pray Psalm 51 because he offered it to the Father in the person of his people. (Miller)

—Carl Menninger would write an intention next to each psalm: for parents, friends, the sick, etc.

¹ *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions & Answers*. Issued by USCCB, November 12, 2003.

3. The Liturgy of the Hours as Liturgical Prayer

—In the Catholic tradition, liturgy includes all seven of the sacramental celebrations as well as the liturgy of the hours, which are the official acts of public worship carried out in the name of the whole church. (Mick)²

—*"The LOH, like other liturgical actions, is not something private but belongs to the whole body of the Church, which it manifests and influences."* (GILOH no. 20)

—So what exactly is the LOH (Liturgy of the Hours)? *"The Liturgy of the Hours is comprised of a repeating cycle of prayers grouped in seven sets — or "hours" — with daily Psalms and readings following the calendar of the universal Church. Each set of prayers is designed to be prayed during a specific segment of the day: morning, mid-morning, midday, mid-afternoon, evening and night, with the seventh "hour" a "floating hour" that may be prayed at any time."* (Article from NCRegister: "Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers")

—Sockey likens the Liturgy of the Hours to a *"flaming torch of prayer being passed around the globe,"* joining praying Catholics to their fellow believers worldwide. (Article from NCRegister: "Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers")

—*"It's extraordinary to think that in the entire world, from the Pope down to the laity, the same words have been spoken for so many centuries. It is a communion through time and space."* (Boissinot)

—See Divine Office app re: number of people praying the Liturgy of the Hours at any given time

—*"As 'part two' of the official, public worship of the Catholic Church — 'part one' being the Mass — it is in a category of prayer different from private devotions."*

--The catechism of the Catholic Church says that the liturgy of the hours is "like an extension of the Eucharistic celebration" that makes the whole day holy by the praise of God (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1174)

—In fact, before daily Mass became customary, the Divine Office was the daily liturgy of the faithful.

—*"In the early Middle Ages, the bells that called priests and monks to prayer also drew in the laity from village and field," Sockey explains. "They would gather to listen as lauds or vespers were chanted."* (Article from NCRegister: "Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers")

—The Angelus prayer: bells rung to call people to pray angelus 3x a day, esp. when they were out in the fields & could not come to the monastery in the village

--not only Catholics: Methodists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Baptist, and others embraced the ancient practice of praying the divine office. (Bass, p. 56)

—It is a prayer without end in time. When I say it, others are asleep and when I sleep, others are saying it. (from "companion prayer book...") (Boissinot)

—*"...due to the encouragement of recent popes, the advent of new technology and the personal witness of Catholic bloggers and writers, the faithful have begun to waken to the timeless beauty of the liturgical prayer."* (Article from NCRegister: "Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers")

² See *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions & Answers*. Issued by USCCB, November 12, 2003.

—*"It is a 'sacrifice of praise' that we pray in union with millions of others around the world, across all the time zones. No wonder Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have recommended the Liturgy of the Hours as the prayer of 'the whole people of God.'"* (Article from NCRegister: "Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers")

—*"It is recommended that there be a communal celebration of the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. This Office, formerly called Tenebræ, could fittingly be celebrated by the bishop in the cathedral with, as far as possible, the participation of the clergy and the laity."* (Ordo for Good Friday)

—The "Status Animarum" asks if the LOH is prayed in each parish and how often.

Part II (Second Presentation)

Before Part II of this Catechesis, recap Part I:

Recap of First Presentation on the LOH:

- 1) The Scriptures (“pray always”) & the history of Jewish prayer (pray at set times during the day) give us the foundation for the LOH
- 2) The LOH is a prayer by the whole Church (priests) with Christ (the Priest) for the salvation of the world.³
- 3) The LOH, like all the sacraments, esp. the Liturgy of the Eucharist, is liturgical, not devotional prayer, that is, the Church’s official act of public worship. It is an extension of the Liturgy of the Eucharist through which we sanctify the whole day by the praise of God.

Learning How to Pray the Breviary

—The first edition of the revised LOH was promulgated on Easter Sunday, April 11, 1971. (Miller)

Take it slow

—“Don’t let the term ‘hours’ scare you,” assures Sockey. *“The typical liturgical hour takes about 10 minutes to recite, and many who pray the Divine Office focus on no more than two or three hours daily.”* (Article from NCRegister: “Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers”)

—“Many Catholics are familiar with the practice of praying certain prayers at certain hours of the day: the Angelus at 6am, noon and 6pm; and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at the 3pm ‘Hour of Mercy,’” observes Jeffrey Pinyan. (Article from NCRegister: “Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers”)

—“But how does a busy layperson find 30, 20 or even 10 minutes daily in which to pray the liturgical hours? *“The key is to start small,”* advises Sockey. *“Examine your daily routine and see which times of day present openings for a short prayer break. If you already like to get up before the rest of the family to savor some peace and quiet, then Morning Prayer should work. If you normally find time to breathe a bit either just before or just after dinner, then Evening Prayer is for you. If you get a decent lunch break at work, try Midday Prayer. Add one liturgical hour at a time and form a firm habit before adding another one. If you’re not sure which to try first, then follow the advice of the Church, which particularly recommends Morning and Evening Prayer to laymen. Or go with my personal recommendation to beginners, which is to start with Night Prayer, the easiest hour to do.”* (Article from NCRegister: “Age-Old Prayer Gains More Pray-ers”)

³ “Christ himself is at work in the liturgy, so that the action of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, participates in the saving act of Christ as priest.” *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions & Answers*. Issued by USCCB, November 12, 2003.

Cycles & Hierarchies

—The liturgical year has *two basic cycles*. One is *sanctoral*, celebrating the feast of numerous saints throughout the year. The other is a *temporal* cycle of seasons and feasts of the Lord. (Mick)

—The *temporal cycle* consists of two major feasts; the Advent and Christmas seasons and the Lent and Easter seasons. (Mick)⁴

—Ordinary Time is the season of the Church Year that is not a Lenten/Easter or Advent/Christmas Season. You will not find the First Sunday of Ordinary Time because the Baptism of the Lord takes place on the First Sunday of Ordinary Time. (Nugent)

—The *sanctoral cycle* deals with the celebrations of feasts of the Lord and of the Saints.

—The Proper of Saints contains the entire Office or portions of the Office for all the saints celebrated during the Church year. Each saint has his or her own office for one day of the year. (Nugent, p. 123).⁵

And here we have a hierarchical ranking of importance.

—From Apostolic times the feasts of Easter, the Ascension and Pentecost were celebrated. In the second century feasts of the Apostles were celebrated and the cult of the Martyrs was of speedy and widespread development. But it was not, probably, till the fourth century, that the feasts of saints who were not martyrs were celebrated. (Quigley)

—A *solemnity* is the highest form of celebration. It is treated like a Sunday. If it falls on a Sunday in ordinary time or the Christmas season, it will replace the Sunday. (Sullivan, p. 52)⁶

—A *feast* is next in order of the celebration. Feasts however are less than a Sunday and do not replace Sunday. Feasts of the Lord however do replace Sundays in ordinary time and Sundays of the Christmas season. (Sullivan)

—A *memorial* is next in order of celebration.

—*Optional memorials* are celebrations that can be chosen or omitted. They maybe chosen, for example, if the churches is named after a particular saint or if the saint is very popular in a particular place or country. The pattern for celebration is the same as that of memorials. Page 58 (Sullivan, p. 58)

—Memorials are listed in regular type. Solemnities are listed in bold capitals. Feasts are listed in regular capitals. Optional memorials are listed in italics. (Sullivan, p. 58)

—“In medieval and colonial times, the Common was a large field where townsfolk used to gather to chat & to graze their livestock. Many towns still have a Common. The Common belongs to the town, not to any one individual. In the breviary, a Common is an office that can be used for a number of celebrations. It is a section used ‘in common.’” (Nugent, p. 127).

⁴ *Ordinary time* is a bit of a misnomer. The Latin title would be more accurately translated as “ordinal,” meaning counted. (Mick)

⁵ Nugent: “When celebrating a saint’s day, use all of the parts of the saint’s office that are printed in the Proper of Saints. When the Proper of Saints is missing some parts of the office, use those parts from other sections of the breviary.”

⁶ Nugent: On Solemnities, Night Prayer after Evening Prayer I and II are prayed instead of whatever the night prayer would be for the weekday.

—The weekdays of the year on which no saint is celebrated are called Ferial Days. (Nugent)

—Commemorations are similar to Optional Memorials and occur only during Lent/Easter and Advent/Christmas. (Nugent)

The Breviary

—Etymology—The word, Breviary, comes from an old Latin word, Breviarium, an abridgment, a compendium. The name was given to the Divine Office, because it is an abridgment or abstract made from holy scripture, the writings of the Fathers, the lives of the Saints. (Quigley)

—Amongst the Latins, the recitation of the Breviary was called the Office (*officium*), because it is the duty, function and office of persons consecrated to God. This is the oldest and most universal name for the Breviary and its recitation. (Quigley)⁷

—Before the eleventh century the prayers of the Divine Office were not all contained in one book, as they are now in the Breviary. The recitation of the Office required the Psalter, the Lectionary, the Book of Homilies, the Legendary, the Antiphonarium, the Hymnal, the Book of Collects, the Martyrology, the Rubrics.⁸

—Shorter Christian Prayer vs. LOTH 4 volume: the 1-volume "Christian Prayer" omits the Office of Readings from the 4-volume "Liturgy of the Hours", and has only a 1-week rather than a 4-week cycle of midday prayers. The brief "Shorter Christian Prayer" deletes further the proper of saints, including only the proper of seasons (this is often used for travelers as it fits readily into a briefcase or purse).

—There is a Mac app called the Divine Office which is excellent as it allows you to read, print or send to Facebook, the various hours in their English translation!

—Mobile apps: see iBreviary.com, DivineOffice.org and universalis.com.

—An Ordo, also called a "guide for Christian prayer," is the daily guide to pray the Divine office for specific year. (Nugent)

⁷ It was called, too, the Divine Office (*officium divinum*), because it has God for its principal object and is recited by persons consecrated to God. It is called the ecclesiastical office (*officium ecclesiasticum*), because it was instituted by the Church. (Other names were, *Opus Dei*; *Agenda*; *Pensum servitutis* (duty service); *Horae*; *Horae Canonicae*. (Quigley)

⁸ The Psalter contained the psalms; the Lectionary (thirteenth century) contained the lessons of the first and second nocturn; the Book of Homilies, the homilies of the Fathers; the Legendary (before the thirteenth century), the lives of the saints read on their feast days. The Hymnal contained hymns; the Book of Collects, prayers, collects and chapters; the Martyrology contained the names with brief lives of the martyrs; the Rubrics, the rules to be followed in the recitation of the Office. (Quigley)

1. The Invitatory

- The Invitatory, coming from the same root as "invitation" begins the praying of the liturgy of the hours each day. (Sullivan)
- Said before either the Office of Readings or Morning Prayer, whichever is prayed first.
- Begins with +“O Lord, open my lips...”, taken from Psalm 51, remind us of God purifying the lips of Isaiah His prophet with a burning coal, of how God opened the lips of Zachary to bless God and to prophesy. "And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke blessing God" (St. Luke, i. 64). (Quigley)
- antiphon before (optionally in-between the verses) and after the psalm, (found in either the Proper of Seasons or the Proper of Saints)

2. Office of Readings

- Etymology. Was formerly known as “Matins” which is derived from Matuta, the Latin name for the Greek goddess of morning. (Quigley)
- Before the end of the first century it had become the practice for Christians to spend the entire night before Easter in prayer and meditation upon the Scriptures, waiting until the dawn of the resurrection. Later an abbreviated form of the vigil preceded every Sunday as a little Easter. (Miller)
- Because of it's length & time of celebration matins became the office of monks to the exclusion of the laity and even the parochial clergy. (Miller, p. 93)
- today we can even interrupt our sleep to sanctify the night with Matins. (Boissinot)
- The biblical readings for the most part fill out what is missing from the readings assigned to the Mass so that virtually the entire Bible is covered by following both the liturgy of the hours at the liturgy of the Eucharist. (Miller)
- In the other hours people are *speaking* to God. In the office of readings the reverse is true; the emphasis is on *listening* to God's word both in scripture and another sources. (“Speak Lord your servant is listening” sums up the spirit of the office of readings.) (Miller, p. 95)
- Days are counted in the Jewish fashion from sundown to sundown. So it is still permissible to anticipate the office of readings after vespers of the preceding day, and such anticipation before a solemnity or feast can be beneficial. (Miller)
- the First Day brings us to the following Sunday, which the ancient authors often referred to as the Eighth Day or the day beyond. (Boissinot)

3. Morning Prayer

- “...it is best that each of them (the Hours) be prayed at at time which most clearly corresponds with its true canonical time.” (GILOH no. 11)
- There is an emphasis on morning and evening prayer as the "hinges on which the daily office turns." (Mick)
- “There was evening and morning,” such is the rhythm found in the Book of Genesis. (Boissinot)
- +“O God come to my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me.” (Psalm 71)

—Morning prayer has as its theme the praise of God, a theme indicated by the Latin name, Lauds. (Miller)

—We thank people, as well as praise them, by telling them what they do well. (Miller)

—Opening Song, 2 Psalms & a Canticle (a song), Scripture Reading/Response, Gospel Canticle of Zechariah, Intercessions, Our Father, Closing Prayer

—The name "Zechariah," literally means "God has remembered." (Miller, p. 77)

—"The 'Benedictus' or Canticle of Zachary recalls the Precursor's mission of proclaiming the Messiah and the new alliance. It is altogether appropriate to the Office of daybreak, as ushering in the dawn of a new era. The closing verse speaks of the light which the announcement of the Messiah shed upon the nations 'sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.'" (Quigley)

—The Jews mourning under the Roman yoke prayed for deliverance through the house of David. The 'deliverance,' was at hand so that the Jews were seeing the fulfillment of God's promise made to Abraham. (Quigley)

—In morning prayer the church gives us a series of invocations whose primary purpose is to consecrate the day to God. (Miller)

—Even an early morning Mass ideally should be preceded by morning prayer. (Miller)

—Sometimes morning prayer is celebrated *instead* of a weekday mass, especially when a priest is not available for mass. Evening prayers sometimes prayed before parish meetings or for the parish at large during Advent and Lent. Most efforts of this type draw on the Cathedral office tradition as a model. (Mick)

4. Daytime Prayer

—Three of the offices are called mid-morning, midday, and mid-afternoon prayer, sometimes called the "little hours." When only one little hour is prayed, that office is called daytime prayer. (Nugent)

—After Vat. II, "Prime" was suppressed; Terce (6am), Sext (Noon), None (3pm) were made into Daytime Prayer (Mid-morning, Midday, Mid-Afternoon); so there were 8 hours in monastic life: Matins (Office of Readings), Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline.

—The name Prime is derived from the Latin *prima* because this part of the Office was said at the first hour of the day, 6 a.m., with us, following the old Roman distribution of the day. (Quigley)

—Cassian tells us the reason that led to the introduction of this Hour: Lauds ended at dawn, and the monks retired to rest. As no other choir work called them until Terce, at 9 a.m., some of them were inclined to rest until that hour and to neglect the spiritual reading and manual work laid down by their rule. To prevent this prolonged rest, it was decided to introduce a short choir service, the recital of a few psalms, and then the monks went to work until Terce; date the origin of this Hour from about the year 382. (Quigley)

—After the Council, Prime was suppressed & only one of the minor hours was required (Daytime Prayer)

—Terce: Etymology. The word Terce comes from the Latin word *tertia* (hora), third. Because this little Hour was said at the third hour of the Roman day, that is, about 9 o'clock in the morning ⁹(Quigley)

—Antiquity. The custom of praying at these three hours, terce, sext and none, is very ancient. It was in use amongst the devout Jews, and the early converts to Christianity retained the practice. (Quigley)

—The word Sext comes from the Latin word *sexta* (hora sexta), the sixth hour, because the little Hour should be said at what was the sixth hour of the Roman day, about mid-day with us. (Quigley)

—The word None comes from the Latin word *nona*, ninth (hora nona), because this part of the Office was said at the ninth hour of the Roman day, that is, about three o'clock in our modern day. (Quigley) This hour was set apart in Apostolic times for joint prayer, "Now Peter and John went up into the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer" (Acts iii).

—Workers in the United States are entitled by law to coffee breaks during the hours of their employment. The church hopes that our devotion will lead us to take at least one "prayer break" during the day at a convenient time between morning and evening prayer. The theme of daytime prayer is God's will. (Miller)

—Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the entire Psalter, running for 176 verses. It has but one topic: God's will. The Psalmist mentions God's will in every one of the 176 versus without exception, but in order to avoid repeating the same word he uses many synonyms. (Miller, p. 88)

5. Evening Prayer

—Etymology. The word vespers comes directly from the Latin *Vesper*; *Vespera* was a name given to the star Venus, which rising in the evening was a call to prayer. (Quigley)

—It was known, too, by the names *Lucernarium*, *hora lucernalis*, the hour of the candles; because at this hour a number of candles were lighted, not only to shed light but for symbolic purposes. (Quigley)

—Evening prayer has two traditional themes: Thanksgiving for the gifts of the day and repentance for sins committed. (Mick)

—For earlier generations the hours of darkness meant rest from work, quiet relaxation, a time to sit peacefully and read or simply reflect, but for us the day is often far from over when evening comes. (Miller)

—The Magnificat is a Mosaic of Old Testament texts which are realized in Mary and the church. (Miller, p. 83)

—According to Jewish custom, a girl engaged to be married would write a poem for her wedding. She probably took her inspiration from traditional popular songs. (Boissinot)

—the Magnificat has been called the "Gospel of Mary." (Boissinot)

—we approach the Magnificat as we do with the gospel: we stand & sign ourselves before it. (Boissinot)

—The intercessions at Vespers are prayers for the benefit of the whole world. They express the "Catholic" aspect of Christian prayer and fulfill the exhortation of the apostle. (Miller, p. 84)

⁹ Terce is also called the golden Hour, *hora aurea*, because at this time of the day, the third Hour, the Holy Ghost, who is typified by gold, descended on the apostles. (Quigley)

6. Night Prayer

—Etymology. The word compline comes from the Latin word *complere*, to complete, to finish, because this Hour completes or finishes the day Hours of the Office. (Quigley)

—The structure of the Hour seems to point to its monastic origin, "The reader begins, 'Pray, Father, a blessing' (jube, domne benedicere); the blessing, 'The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.'¹⁰ (Quigley)

—night prayer is the time for an examination of conscience since symbolically we are about to appear before God in death. Darkness and sleep are biblically and poetically a symbol of death. (night prayer); Night prayer prepares us not only for sleep but also for death.

—This is the "official" time for an examination of conscience; the pause at the beginning of mass is for reflection on our unworthiness, and acknowledgement of sinfulness, but not an examination of conscience. (Miller)

—In the Gospel Canticle of Simeon, which follows the responsory, we identify with an old man who is about to die, a man who approaches death willingly because he has seen salvation in the person of Jesus Christ. (Miller)

—A day is like a little lifetime. During each 24 hour period, we live the Paschal mystery in miniature: in sleep we die symbolically and waking we come to life again. (Miller, p. 100)

—By a long tradition dating back to the 500s, night prayer concluded with a hymn to Our Lady. Two of these prayers have an explicit allusion to death: the Hail Mary & the Hail Holy Queen (Miller)

Monastic and Cathedral Styles

The Monastic Office

—Until the fourth century, on Sundays and other feasts of martyrs, the Christian community took part in an office for prayer, mornings and evenings, on the guidance of its clergy. This office consisted of readings from the Bible and psalms. Later on, the monks developed it into prayers to be recited at different hours of the day, the main ones being Lauds, Vespers & the night office called matins. They added Terce, Sext & None to sanctify the course of the whole day.¹¹ The clerics of the Mendicant orders, who were mostly involved in preaching, what often miss the coral service. And so they carried with them and abbreviated version of the office, hence the name Breviary. The clergy adopted the Breviary for the recitation of the hours in private. (Boissinot)

¹⁰ After the Abbot had given his blessing and begged of God to grant the two-fold favour of a quiet night and a good death, a monk read from Holy Scripture, and when a suitable portion was read, or at the end of a Scripture chapter or theme, the Abbot said, "Tu autem," (Google translate: "But you") and the reader "Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis" (Google translate: "But you, O Lord, have mercy on us.") This was to ask God to pardon faults both of reader in his reading and of monks, who, perhaps, were drowsy and inattentive. The Abbot terminated the exercise by the Adjutorium nostrum (the Pater Noster is of more recent introduction). (Quigley)

¹¹ Monks in a monastery sustain themselves in prayer through ritual, rhythm, and routine. (Rolheiser)

—Psalm 119, v. 164: “Seven times a day I will praise you.” St. Benedict wanted his monks to pray 7 hours daily to correspond with scripture. He called the 7 hours of prayer the “Opus Dei” or the “work of God.” (Nugent)

—If a priest or deacon is present, he ordinarily presides. GILOH, no. 254.

—The individual holding the highest position of the church leads the Divine office unless that individual delegates the duty to someone else. (Nugent)

—A priest or deacon may wear a stole over the alb or surplus. A priest may also wear a cope. (Nugent)

The Cathedral office

—The Cathedral office consisted primarily of two prayer services, one at dawn and one at sunset.

—The liturgy of the hours offers the opportunity for more creativity than does the celebration of the holy Eucharist. On the other hand, too many variations inhibit the sense of ritual. Familiarity with how the prayers offered is comforting and gives a sense of being at home. Children love repetition. (Miller, p. 138)

—The Cathedral office also came to be called the canonical office because it was maintained at the Cathedral in each city by a group of ministers called canons. When any of the canons was traveling, he was expected to pray the office at the same time as his confrères at the Cathedral. From this develop the requirement that the clergy recite the office daily, whether in common or alone.

Using the Liturgy of the Hours in our Devotional (Personal) Prayer

—devotional prayer must flow from & lead the faithful back to the liturgy (Begolly)

—During a liturgy meeting, a group of priests were saying evening prayer together when the lights went out in the chapel. A Dominican stood up and said, “my brothers, let us take this opportunity to reflect on the philosophical essence of light and darkness.” A Franciscan stood and said, “my brothers, let us take this moment of darkness to think God for the beauty of our sister, the light.” A Jesuit went and changed the fuse. Contemplation and prayer lead to action. (Miller)

—the Church recommends the LOH during eucharistic adoration

—use at home or before/after Mass during week or on the weekend

—the rosary is the “poor man’s psalter”: “Before printing was invented, books were fabulously expensive. Most of the world was illiterate and poor, and poor men did not own books. Often only monastic communities and churches had books. The book of the Psalms was used for the daily recitation of prayers (something that continues today). The common folk wanted to pray daily like the monks but had no books to read the psalms from. Not up to memorizing all 150 Psalms, they recited an Our Father or Hail Mary in the place of each psalm. They strung 150 beads together, one for each psalm, so they could keep count. Other prayers and meditations were added to this beaded string of fifteen decades, until we arrived at the rosary we have today.”

(<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/why-is-the-rosary-referred-to-as-the-poor-mans-psalter>)¹²

Incorporating the Liturgy of the Hours in our Parish Community

—Does the parish have a true liturgical sense or just a devotional one?¹³

—“in the classical theology of the Church, the Eucharist has been seen not so much as the soul’s meeting with Christ, but rather as the *concorporatio cum Christo*—as the Christians’ becoming one in the one body of the Lord. (Pope Benedict in “The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood”)

—this is why we stand while we are receiving Communion

—“*The arrangement of the people is especially important. A group of persons scattered about the church does not convey a sense of unity, quite the contrary.*” (Boissinot)

—The Divine office was written to be prayed out loud and in choir. Another words, it was written to be prayed by religious living in communities and by priests praying with others in their churches. Praying in choir means praying as a group but alternating sides. (Nugent, p. 204)

—It would be most appropriate for the LOH to be prayed when the pastor cannot be present for daily Mass (again, lay people used the LOH before daily Mass was the norm).

—should the LOH be prayed in place of (or at least in addition to) the rosary that is prayed before daily Mass?¹⁴

—the LOH (esp. in a modified form) before parish meetings

—the LOH can be prayed between Masses on Sunday

—the LOH can be prayed on Sundays late afternoons (Vespers) esp. during Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter Seasons

*Review the online and book resources that are listed on the outline for the catechetical presentations.

Footnote:

“The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has approved a plan to draft an amended edition of the English-language LOH for use in the US.

The Committee on Divine Worship will begin translation and editing. It will present a full draft to the conference when its work is completed. If approved, the draft

¹² “the 150 Hail Marys that were recited for the rosary were an adaptation of the medieval monastic practice of reciting the 150 psalms in the Psalter.” *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions & Answers*. Issued by USCCB, November 12, 2003.

¹³ On the question of whether the rosary (instead of the Liturgy of the Hours) should be prayed when daily Mass cannot be celebrated: “...popular devotions should never be portrayed as equal to the liturgy, nor can they adequately substitute for the liturgy.” *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions & Answers*. Issued by USCCB, November 12, 2003.

¹⁴ Precisely because every liturgical celebration “is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church,” no other form of worship can take its place: a liturgical celebration “is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.” *Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions & Answers*. Issued by USCCB, November 12, 2003.

would be submitted to the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for approval.

The edition will include changes in light of the new edition of the Roman Missal. Hymns will use English translations of Latin hymns provided by the ICEL, which will also be consulted on translations of several regularly used prayers." (from CNA/EWTN News)

APPENDIX C

Presentation on the Psalms and Preparation for Praying Lauds

History of the Psalms

- The psalms developed over a period of some 700 years. Some psalms were composed before the exile in 587 BC and others after. (Miller)
- they were used in both personal & communal prayer (the liturgical prayers in the Temple) (Boissinot)
- Whole history of God dealing with his people; include story of Christ in a *symbolic* way
- Psalms are written by God; God inspired them in the SS;
- Pope Pius XII emphasized that basic to arriving at the intention of the *divine* author of the Scriptures is the effort to discover the intention of the *human* authors of the Scriptures. This is the central idea of his encyclical, published in 1943, called *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. We should not, therefore, be disappointed if some psalms do not at first appeal to us or do not seem to agree with our spirituality. (Miller)
- Interpret psalms on 3 levels: 1) literal meaning of the psalm, 2) christological meaning (reference to Christ & his Church, allegorical), 3) moral meaning: how it refers to you, the pray-er; (Menninger)
- example of *literal* meaning: women would give birth sitting on a chair; midwife would hand child to father & that was a sign he was accepting the paternity of that child: "You drew me forth from the womb" (Menninger)
- e.g.: Psalm 22: Most important psalm? Church has always interpreted this as referring to the passion of Christ, thus the *Christological* meaning; *Moral* meaning: we make up in our lives what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. (Menninger)

Psalms as music & poetry

- The word "psalm" is from the Greek word which means *a stringed instrument*, which is the type of instrument which would often accompany the singing of the prayers. (Miller)
- The poetry of the psalms is best expressed when they are sung. The words of the psalms are lyrics which were set to music. We have no record of what the melodies were. In fact, only rarely would any musical notations have been written. People readily memorized the musical accompaniment (the melodies were simple) (Miller, p. 25)
- "*The verb 'to sing' is one of the most commonly used words in the Bible. It occurs 309 times in the Old Testament and 36 times in the new. When man comes into contact with God, mere speech is not enough.*" (Pope Benedict in *Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 136)
- The structure of Hebrew poetry is based on parallelism. Two and sometimes three verses stand in relationship to each other. (Miller)

Psalms express all of our emotions

- Express the whole gamut of experiences that we have as humans;
- The whole of human life is in the book of Psalms. It is unfolded in dialogue with God. (Spirit of the Liturgy)
- “The book of Psalms addresses every facet of the spiritual journey, the ups & downs, heights the soul ascends, depths to which it falls. The Psalms offer praises as well as curses, consolation and desolation, boasts of strength and cries of weakness. Mostly, they make me feel less alone.”* (Regina Brett, “God Never Blinks”)
- “You don't need to be a scholar to understand the Psalms. You just need a soul.”* (Brett, p. 176)
- “It seems safe to say that the Psalms portray the Jewish people as emotional—highly, visibly so. They wear their heart on their sleeve, as Shakespeare says. They are very expressive, rarely hiding their feelings, whether this public expression is pleasing to others or not. There is not ‘stiff upper lip’ for them.”* (from America Magazine article, “A Complicated Apostle: Who was St. Paul?” November 10, 2008)

Psalms & our enemies

- We believe that there is a distinction between the sinner & the sin, and we tried to hate the sin while loving the sinner. Hebrew thought made no such distinctions. Reality was concrete. Since sin is wicked, sinners are wicked people. (Miller)
- Common for people in OT to pray against enemies instead of for them; curses; Jesus explicitly changes this; don't pray those psalms with that meaning; “You have heard it said...but I say to you...”
- Church allows us to omit those lines of the psalms that include curses; Menninger crosses them out of his book!
- Others still say them but change the meaning in their own mind; (Talk by Fr. Carl Menninger: A Joyful Song, St. Paschal Baylon, September 12, 2011)

Psalms Omitted from the Psalter

- From the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours: no. 131. *“Three psalms (58, 83, and 109) have been omitted from the psalter cycle because of their curses; in the same way, some verses have been omitted from certain psalms, as noted at the head of each. The reason for the omission is a certain psychological difficulty, even though the psalms of imprecation are in fact used as prayer in the New Testament, for example, Rv 6:10, and in no sense to encourage the use of curses.”*
- Psalm 58: “The wicked go astray from the womb; they err from their birth, speaking lies...O God, break the teeth in their mouths; tear out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord...The righteous will rejoice when they see vengeance done; they will bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked.” (NAB Footnote: “The Psalm is less concerned with personal vengeance than with public vindication of God’s justice now.”)

Psalm 109:

"Appoint an evil one over him,
 an accuser to stand at his right hand,
 That he may be judged and found guilty,
 that his plea may be in vain.
 May his days be few;
 may another take his office.
 May his children be fatherless,
 his wife, a widow.
 May his children wander and beg,
 driven from their hovels.
 May the usurer snare all he owns,
 strangers plunder all he earns.
 May no one treat him with mercy
 or pity his fatherless children.
 May his posterity be destroyed,
 their name rooted out in the next generation.
 May his fathers' guilt be mentioned to the Lord;
 his mother's sin not rooted out.
 May their guilt be always before the Lord,
 till their memory is banished from the earth,
 For he did not remember to show mercy,
 but hounded the wretched poor
 and brought death to the brokenhearted.
 He loved cursing; may it come upon him;
 he hated blessing; may none come to him.
 May cursing clothe him like a robe;
 may it enter his belly like water,
 his bones like oil.
 May it be near as the clothes he wears,
 as the belt always around him"

Psalm 137:

"Blessed the one who seizes your children
 and smashes them against the rock."

How to Pray the Psalms in the breviary

—The introduction of antiphonal chanting was introduced into Rome at the time of St. Ambrose and liturgical hymn singing, too, was introduced about the same time. (Quigley)

—The "Psalm prayers" are a supplement to the psalms and are optional. They are not official. In the Latin addition of the breviary they are found in an appendix, but the editors of the English translation placed a prayer after each psalm for convenience. (Miller, p. 140)

—Besides the 147 psalms, there are 39 canticles from the OT & 9 from the NT ((Boissinot)

—Glory be after the psalms & canticles: This form of doxology, "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit," was adopted to repel Arianism, by giving to the faithful a compact theological formula by which they could end every dispute. (Quigley)

Preparation for Praying Lauds:

See *page 13* of the Ordinary for the opening invocation ("O Lord open my lips..."); make the sign of the cross over the lips as this is said.

See *p. 356* for the antiphon for the Invitatory (found in the Proper of Seasons for Advent). The Invitatory is found on *page 22*. Repeat the antiphon between each strophe (verse) as presider prays the verses.

See *page 43* for Morning Prayer of the First Sunday of Advent.

Opening Song, *p. 609, no. 63* (remain standing).

Sit for the Psalms. Presider to say the first antiphon. Left side (Mary's side) will say the first verse, then alternate verses with the right side (Joseph's side). This is called praying "in choir": praying in a group but alternating sides.

Glory be (the breviary version) at the end of each psalm & canticle (including Canticle of Zechariah), then all will join in saying the antiphon for each of these after the Psalm Prayer is prayed by the presider.

Reading to be done by volunteer (please stand in place). End with "The Word of the Lord."

Reader to lead the Responsory as well.

Stand for the Canticle of Zechariah. The Canticle of Zechariah is found on the inside of the front cover. Make the sign of the cross at the beginning, after the antiphon. End with the Glory be and then all say the antiphon together found on *p. 359* in the Proper of Seasons for Advent morning prayer.

All respond to the 2nd part of the intercessions. You will be offered the option of mentioning your own (keep in mind these should be for others, not oneself).

All pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Presider says the closing prayer & gives the blessing. (See *p. 30* in the Ordinary for the blessing in the absence of a priest or deacon or in individual recitation).

+God, come to our assistance.
Lord, make haste to help us.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen.

Hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." (#38)

*Ant. (Presider) See how glorious he is, coming forth as
Savior of all peoples!*

Psalms 110

*The Messiah, king and priest. Christ's reign will last until all
his enemies are made subject to him (1 Corinthians 15:25).*

**L. The Lord's revelation to my Master:
"Sit on my right:
your foes I will put beneath your feet."**

**R. The Lord will wield from Zion
your scepter of power:
rule in the midst of all your foes.**

**L. A prince from the day of your birth
on the holy mountains;
from the womb before the dawn I begot you.**

**R. The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change.
"You are a priest for ever,
a priest like Melchizedek of old."**

**L. The Master standing at your right hand
will shatter kings in the day of his great wrath.**

**R. He shall drink from the stream by the wayside
and therefore he shall lift up his head.**

**L. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit:
R. as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for
ever. Amen.**

Psalms-prayer (Presider)

Father, we ask you to give us victory and peace. In Jesus
Christ, our Lord and King, we are already seated at your
right hand. We look forward to praising you in the
fellowship of all your saints in our heavenly homeland.

**Ant. See how glorious he is, coming forth as Savior of
all peoples!**

Canticle

Alleluia #1 (#576)

*Reading & Reflection
Philippians 4:4-5*

Magnificat (#848)

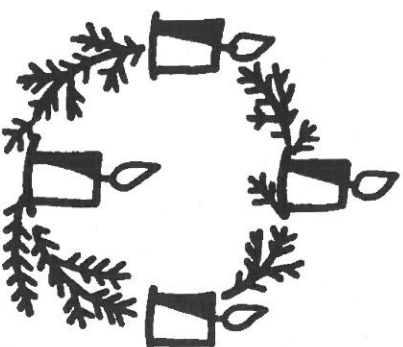
*Intercessions
"Come, Lord Jesus!"*

Lord's Prayer (Chanted)

Closing Prayer & Blessing

*Hymn to Our Lady (#700)
"Gentle Women"*

*The English translation of The Liturgy of the Hours (Four Volumes)
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Due to its age, this book on the breviary can seem rather humorous to twenty-first century readers given its focus on the serious obligation of clergy to pray the Office. It does not encourage or even speak of the use of the breviary by the laity and should be read only to be enlightened by how this prayer was viewed by clergy of the early decades of the twentieth century and earlier.

Ratzinger, Joseph. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000.

Though Benedict XVI expresses a preference for more traditional ways of praying the liturgy, he does a wonderful job at emphasizing the need to understand and

experience the liturgy as a communal event that is as focused on our brothers and sisters as it is on the God that we worship together.

_____. *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, 2nd ed. San Francisco, C: Ignatius Press, 1983.

Ratzinger focuses heavily on the theme of a communal spirituality in this book on Christian Brotherhood. Relying on the themes of both Old and New Testaments, he speaks of the unique relationship that Christians have with one another as they seek a unity that is tied to their faith in God.

Rolheiser, Ronald. *Our One Great Act of Fidelity*. New York: Doubleday, 2011.

Rossetti, Stephen J., *Born of the Eucharist: A Spirituality for Priests, With a Reflection by Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J.* Edited by Stephen J. Rossetti. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2009.

This is a book for priests interested in deepening their spirituality precisely as ordained ministers of the Church whose primary act of ministry is presiding at the Eucharistic table.

Sassani, Father John E. *Renewing the Priestly Heart*. New Jersey: Renew International, 2011.

The author focuses on how to live as a priest in our modern, hectic culture.

Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011.

Though this book offers practical advice on how to write a theses for the Doctor of Ministry degree, he also touches on some topics that were pertinent to the writing of this topic concerning a communal spirituality.

Sullivan, Shirley. *Practical Guide for the Liturgy of the Hours*. New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2008.

This small book provides some brief but helpful explanations concerning the praying of the Divine Office. However it is geared more to learning how to pray the Hours in private than in a communal or public setting.

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This is a classic text in the study of the Liturgy of the Hours. Taft traces the development of daily prayer in the Christian East as well as the West, and

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Tally, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1986.

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Wahl, Thomas Peter. *The Lord's Song in a Foreign Land: The Psalms as Prayer*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

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https://www.fdlc.org/liturgy_resources/liturgy_of_the_hours.htm